



Anal Health Glossary

A Resource for HIV Services Providers in non-clinical health care settings.

This glossary was developed to familiarize providers with medical terminology and casual terms that may be used with clients during a discussion on anal health. Though street language is constantly changing, the slang terms with the 🍑 symbol, are commonly used by clients (and providers) when discussing HIV & STD prevention as it relates to anal sex.

Glossary

Anorectal - both the anus and rectum (anal canal).

Anoscopy - examination where an instrument (scope) is inserted into the anus to visualize abnormalities. When this is magnified using a microscope, it is referred to as a high resolution anoscopy (HRA).

Bareback - unprotected anal sex, sex without using a condom. 🍑

Bottom - the receptive partner in anal sex, also known as the “passive” partner. 🍑

Digital rectal exam (DRE) - examination where a medical provider probes the inside of the anus using a finger to detect masses, pain or other abnormalities. In men, the prostate is often examined using this method.

Douching - the flushing of the contents of the anus and rectum via water or glycerin enema. This is sometimes performed using a shower nozzle or other make-shift hose. 🍑

Fissures - painful splits/tears of the internal or external anus, often caused by passing a hard or dry stool, or from trauma, such as harsh wiping or rough receptive anal sex.

Glossary

Fisting - slowly stretching out the anal sphincters to allow for a fist and forearm to be inserted into a receptive partner. 🚫

Hemorrhoids - normal venous structures in the anal canal that with certain conditions (constipation, chronic diarrhea, straining) can become engorged and lead to anal itch, anorectal bleeding, or pain with bowel movements.

Lube - lubricant used to have anal sex. 🚫

Pap smear - a swab of the anus used to collect cells to test for changes related to human papillomavirus (HPV) infection. Also known as the Papanicolaou test.

Plugging - the administration of illicit drugs such as crystal methamphetamine and cocaine, into the rectum for a rapid high. Also known as “booty-bumping” and “butt rocket”. 🚫

PNP - drugs and having sex, or having sex while high. 🚫

Rimming - oral-anal sex (anilingus), licking in or around the anus during sex. 🚫

Sphincter - ring-shaped muscle that surrounds an opening in the body that can tighten to close, or relax to open. The anus has two sphincters: internal and external.

STI - sexually transmitted infection, previously referred to as sexually transmitted disease (STD). These include gonorrhea, chlamydia, lymphogranuloma venereum (LGV), herpes, syphilis, HIV, human papillomavirus (HPV) and others.

Top - the insertive partner in anal sex, also known as the “active” partner. 🚫

Versatile - the sexual partner who engages in both top (active) and bottom (passive) anal sex.

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