- **Warm water bath with drops of antiseptic-** This sooths the anus, and prevents infection in the tear. It helps to relax the anal tone.
- **High fibre diet-** Regular drinking of 'Isapgul' (rice husk), before going to bed, increases the bulk of stool and softens it. I have seen many young guys and girls who suffer from constipation only due to lack of fibber in their diet or due to irregular meal consumption.
- **Lactulose-** This medication helps in relieving constipation and regularises the bowel. It can be taken in the first few days of treatments. But if diarrhoea occurs it is better to avoid it.

Surgery

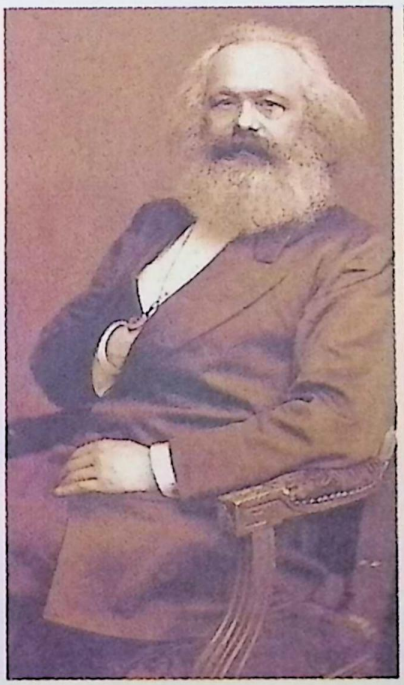
An operation is an option if the fissure fails to heal despite the above treatments. It is also an option if you have fissures which recur. This is a minor operation which is usually done as day case surgery. The success rate with surgery is very high - at least 9 in 10 cases are cured.

But surgery has its complications (though minute), so it is better to avoid it as much as possible.

Anal Fissure Facts

- A few drops of blood may be seen in the toilet pan or when wiping. In an infant, there may be blood in the diaper.







Many famous persons in history had piles. Karl Marx became beset with haemorrhoids when he was writing *Das Kapital*. In a letter to Friedrich Engels he said, "To finish I must at least be able to sit down... I hope the bourgeoisie will remember my carbuncles."

- **Painkillers-** I personally do not prescribe them, but they can be taken to relieve extreme pain from defecation. Avoid codeine containing painkillers in these cases.

Preventive measures

- **Drinking plenty of water and eating plenty of fibre-** These softens the faeces and helps to avoid constipation.
- **Regular Defecation-** Some people suppress the need of passing stools due to various reasons, which is an unhealthy practice, and causes formation of hard stools.
- Diagnosis is made by gleaning the patient's medical history and inspection of the anus. No other tests are usually needed.
- Surgery is considered only after diet and medications have failed.

***Anal fissures and Haemorrhoids (Piles) show nearly the same symptoms. Please don't get baffled. Consult a doctor if needed.*

The writer is a Research Physician of Centre for Child and Adolescent Health (CCAH), International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr'b)