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Your Fine Behind

About the body's (perhaps) most important organ

(Gyldendal logo)

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To our potential future children.

*We apologise for any shame you may feel when you discover that your fathers
have written a book about the asshole.*

Chapter 3 – The history of anal medicine

The anal health of Norwegians is better than ever before, and among the best on the planet. Who shall we thank for this? The Crown Prince of Norway? Santa Claus? The Healer from Snåsa? No, we must look further back in time to understand why we are doing so well.

All peoples have throughout all the ages suffered from afflictions in their anuses. It is therefore natural that people have continually sought to cure these afflictions. Of course, many things were done that later proved to be foolish. We have essentially made mistakes, again and again. But making mistakes is not only negative. We can learn from our mistakes and better ourselves. In other words, it is thanks to history's insane attempts to alleviate our anal afflictions that we have such good anal health today.

Let us take a journey together, a journey through the past couple of millenniums of anal medical history and around the globe.

Anal medicine in Egypt

The first written sources of anal medicine come from Egypt. The Ebers Papyrus and the Edwin Smith Papyrus are two of the oldest medical texts in existence. Among other things, the first description of surgical treatment is found in these texts. Both were written around 1600 BC, but contain medical teachings from long before this date. It is in these papyrus scrolls that one can read about the Egyptians' experiences with anal medicine.

Of course, the Egyptians could not provide precise medical explanations for everything they did. (Not just because they wrote in blasted hieroglyphics, but also because their knowledge was limited.) There was also a good deal of magic involved and they believed it was necessary to combine medicine and magic.

Nonetheless, these experiences formed an important foundation for the anal medical treatments of today. For example, they washed the anus using different types of fluids, to relieve constipation, a method that is still in use to this day. Another method was to alleviate anal itching by mixing cumin into lard for use as a salve. The Egyptians thought that anal medicine could cure everything from headaches to sexual dysfunction.

The papyruses also contain descriptions of treatments that didn't work, and which were therefore discontinued. The Egyptians were above all adaptable and medical treatments therefore quickly improved. That is more than can be said for many of today's alternative medicine providers. Such as acupuncturists. They practise an ancient technique which has never worked and never will work. But because it is ancient, from a place far away, well, then it must be effective?

By the way, acupuncture is not just foolishness. It functions 100 percent of the time for one specific condition. That is the condition known as "I would like to have many tiny holes all over my body." For patients suffering from this condition, acupuncture is exceptionally effective, though only for short periods of time, because the body repairs the holes.

The Egyptians did not take anal illnesses lightly. By the year 2500 BC, the country had physicians who specialized in anal illnesses. It must be said that at that time they had far more medical specialties than we are accustomed to, such as an "inspector of body fluids" and a "supervisor of butchers". Nonetheless, as wise as they were, they also had anal experts. The Pharaoh's private anus doctor was called "The shepherd of the royal anus".

We have not succeeded in making contact with Norway's King Harald, but as far as we know he has not, as of today, hired an anus shepherd. Another name for the same Egyptian profession was "Guard of the Anus". We can neither manage to find this job description among the approximately 150 permanent positions at the Royal Household of Norway. So we will give it a try:

Dear King Harald.

We are two physicians who hereby submit our application for the position Shepherd of the Royal Anus. We can also double as court jesters. We work well independently and as a team.

We are available for an interview at short notice.

Best regards Kaveh and Jonas

Anal pleasure in South America

Let's move forward to 1000–700 BC and take a trip to Mexico. This was quite a long time ago, so it was the Olmecs who lived there and it was of course not called Mexico. It is in fact such a long time ago that they hadn't even invented the taco. How can you enjoy life and be happy without taco Fridays? Well, the Olmecs injected narcotic substances into the anus which sent them into psychedelic trances. Because medicine is not just about healing sickness, it is also about improving our health.

Anal intoxication, pleasure and religion were closely affiliated in South America for a long time after the Olmecs. This is best documented in the Mayan culture, which left behind an abundance of clay pots and cave art (the Instagram of the olden days). They proudly depicted the illustrious citizens of society receiving a variety of intoxicants by rectal administration. The Maya civilization is alive to this day, with more than eight million Mayas. We don't know how they feel about anal intoxication now.

In Norway we don't avail ourselves of psychedelic narcotics in the anus to the same extent, but anus and pleasure are nonetheless closely affiliated for many people. The problem is that the anus is far more taboo-ridden in our society, so it is therefore rarely a topic of conversation around the water cooler at the office. Even on social media it isn't common to share anal pleasures. In this particular area, we must concede that Mayan culture was more progressive than we are now, because is it really so darn inappropriate to talk about the pleasures of the anus?

Asian anus

At around the same time as when the anus was flourishing in South America, Sushruta lived in India. He was a doctor who lived around 600 BC and has played an important role in traditional Indian medicine. Among other achievements, he was the world's first plastic surgeon, something which makes us wonder about whether the Indians were the world's first vain people. He is perhaps best known for having written *Sushruta Samhita*, which is one of the most important medical and surgical textbooks in history.

He was also interested in good anal health and wrote many wise words about haemorrhoids and sores around the anus. He has written in detail about salves, pills and dietary changes. A number of his recommendations are still valid for good anal health. For

example, he focused on the importance of physical activity every day and a diet that ensured soft stools.

We can't speak about the Asian anus without paying homage to our Muslim friends. While the Church put a stop to the development of medicine in Europe in the Middle Ages, the anal development in the Arabic countries experienced strong growth. In other words, broad scientific advancements were made. Muslim rulers were famous for having great faith in science as an important tool. This has since been called the Islamic Golden Age and lasted from around 750 AD to 1250 AD.

There is one Persian in particular whom we think it is important to mention. (Persian is what Iranians call themselves when they don't want to be associated with all the negative things taking place in Iran.) His name was Avicenna, and in his appearance he resembled in fact one of the authors of this book quite a bit. He wrote *The Canon of Medicine* in the year 1025. This is a medical encyclopaedia which was widely used as a textbook at universities around the world all the way up to the 17th century. Avicenna knew what he was doing, because an entire chapter is dedicated exclusively to anal medicine.

In spite of the key role Muslim countries have played for the anus, many Muslim countries have an inflamed relationship to the anus these days. Particularly male anuses. In some Muslim countries compulsory anal examinations are done to determine whether people are homosexual. It is of course impossible to establish homosexuality by carrying out an anal exam. Not only is an anal exam of little use when it comes to the complex emotional aspects of sexuality and predilection, but the anus itself cannot speak and thereby provide the examiner with small hints about what has been going on there recently.

Anal in Europe

In Europe we have had our own celebrity physicians. The Greek Hippocrates (460–370 BC) and Roman Galen (70–130 AD) are perhaps the most well-known. They laid the foundation for scientific anal medicine and have described everything from salve treatments of the anus to complicated surgeries that are still in use. For example, both of these doctors prescribed the rubber band method for the treatment of haemorrhoids, a technique surgeons still use to this day. More about that later, in the section about haemorrhoids.

The Hippocratic Oath, which doctors must sign in many countries in order to practise medicine, stipulates that the physician will never injure or cause a patient harm. This runs a bit against a treatment method that Hippocrates used for haemorrhoids. The patient was burned with a red-hot iron in the anus, without any anaesthetic besides a few friendly assistants holding the patient's head, arms and legs in place. Having said this, it is still common to burn a blood vessel if you want it to stop bleeding. So he wasn't completely nuts, Hippocrates.

Europe was generally speaking experiencing a very good flow, in purely scientific terms, up until the Church intervened. They liked meaningless moralizing better than science, so the science of the Middle Ages was not much to brag about. It is only after the Renaissance, from the 16th century and onward, that we Europeans can again boast of advances in anal medicine.

One of the earliest stories with a happy ending from Europe is the treatment of the anal fistula of Louis XIV of France. An anal fistula is, in brief, an additional hole beside the anus that creates a lot of problems in the form of pains and leaking of stools. For the French king, the illness meant that he couldn't go horseback riding or sit on the throne. This was catastrophic for the king's status at this time.

Are you wondering why the king even developed an anal fistula? Good question. The answer is that Jesus gave it to him. Yes, let's explain this in further detail. At the time, the Church maintained that bathing was dangerous and people listened to the Church. It was

believed that illness lay in dirty water and was absorbed through the skin. They even advised against rinsing the face with water, because it could among other things weaken one's eyesight. The king followed this advice and it is said that he only bathed twice in his lifetime. A Russian ambassador who was in contact with Louis XIV all the time described the king as "a man with the stench of a wild animal".

The king's poor anal hygiene is considered to be the main reason why he developed infections around his anus, which in turn led to this anal fistula. (Again, we cover all of these illnesses later on in this book. All you need to know now is that an anal fistula can be extremely painful.)

After several unsuccessful attempts at treatment, including branding the king's anus with a red-hot ember, the task was assigned to a hairdresser/surgeon. At that time hairdressers were often also surgeons. A fancier name for the profession is barber-surgeon. This barber-surgeon was given six months to come up with a cure. In the course of this time period, the king gave him 75 people to practise on. Several of these people died during the experiments, but that was a small price to pay for helping the king.

In the end the barber-surgeon, Charles-François Félix, developed a special instrument, the royal probe. It was a thin, S-shaped scalpel which was to be inserted into the king's anus. This instrument can still be found in the museum of medical history in Paris.

The procedure itself took three hours and was extremely painful, according to the barber-surgeon's 18-page description of the operation. In the king's official papers, two sentences were recorded, stating that he had undergone the treatment with a stoic calm. The most important thing, despite what actually took place in the course of the three hours, is that it was successful.

The success of this one anus operation is said to be one of the most important things to have occurred in relation to the status of the surgical profession in the West. At that time surgeons were not held in particularly high regard; their status was a good distance below that of medical doctors. But the French king was so satisfied with the surgeon's work on his anus, that it was cause for an enormous boost for the status of surgery in the West. Among other things, special places were established for students of surgery at prestigious universities. (Today surgeons are stigmatized by other doctors. For example, it is said that orthopaedic surgeons, who operate on injuries in the skeleton and muscles, that they are half as strong as oxen, but twice as smart.)

While this advancement was taking place in France, we can take a trip to England to see what the Brits were up to. A problem in London was that people kept drowning in the River Thames. A few logical proposals for fixing this problem would perhaps have been to put up a fence, or make life vests available. The medical profession agreed upon something completely different. We physicians maintained that it was a great idea to blow cigarette smoke into the assholes of people who had fallen in the river and almost drowned. The queen gave the idea that this could resuscitate them her full support.

All along the River Thames first aid kits were put out that contained a tinderbox, tobacco and a pipe. If you saw someone who was in the process of drowning, you were to save his or her life by blowing smoke up their ass.

Now you may be thinking: Why in the world did they do that? No points for you. Everyone should think: Why in the world did they do that? In fact, it is such a self-evident question that those who *didn't* ask the question will be penalized.

Well, the answer to why they blew smoke up the anal canal of potential drowning victims is basically that at that time they accepted myths as truth. This is something we still do, for that matter, just think about all the folk remedies you know and how many of them you actually follow without knowing whether they work.

According to an urban myth from around 1750, there was a man in France who was in despair because his wife had almost drowned in a river. She was lying on the river bank and the man wondered what he should do. Suddenly a soldier came riding past and offered him a helping hand. Or more precisely, a helping pipe. “Stick this pipe in her bum and blow smoke into the other end,” he said. Allegedly the drowning victim was to have been revived by this.

The majority of those with a certain amount of anatomic knowledge know that smoke in the rectum does not expel water from the lungs. So the story begs a number of additional questions. If it did actually work in the original story, one wonders about how close to drowning the wife was in the first place. One can also wonder about how desperate the man was, who actually performed the procedure. But the most interesting character in the anecdote must obviously be the soldier, who was either completely insane and gave completely useless advice to people who were trying to save someone’s life, or had some kind of sick sense of humour, so he perhaps thought “That guy there looks pretty desperate, I bet he’s willing to do just about anything to save that lady, so what is the stupidest suggestion I can come up with? Hmmmm ... I have a pipe and a little tobacco in my pocket ...” Personally we are fans of the last explanation.

They gave up, however, on the entire smoke-up-the-ass debacle in 1811, in that there had not been a single report of a case where it had actually worked. Instead of just laughing at “the stupid Brits”, we can actually learn something from them. Because we are not so much better off in the present day. Far more people try homeopathic medicine over and over again, even though it never has any impact on illness – but people keep listening to homeopaths all the same.

The Brits had, if nothing else, a nice poem to fire up the mood. The poem was intended to encourage people to employ the tobacco smoke-up-the-anus method. It is quite charming that you would receive a little poetic guidance while pulling down the trousers of a random drowning victim and puffing smoke into their rectum.

Tobacco glister, breathe and bleed,
keep warm and rub till you succeed,
and spare no pains for what you do,
may one day be repaid to you.

Tobacco smoke in the bum was also used to cure other illnesses. It was supposed to heal sores, rashes and haemorrhoids in the anus. And sometimes it worked, it must be said. Or more precisely, people recovered because time also passed while they were receiving this treatment. What one otherwise did during this time, could have decidedly little import. And at that time, that was all that was necessary: A theory about why something is supposed to work, combined with a few anecdotes demonstrating that it did work. You know, in the same manner as for homeopathy.

The road ahead

Anal medicine has changed and it is guaranteed that it will continue to change in the future. Medical truths often have a surprisingly short shelf-life. Nonetheless, we have no choice but to put our trust in science, even though it has often failed us and will certainly fail us again. Sometimes we can only think of the words of B.S. Ingemann: “Times will come, times will go.” Yes, things change and it’s a good thing they do.

Chapter 6 – Anal sex

Did you skip directly this chapter, the chapter on anal sex? Seriously? Get it together, go back to page one and start from the beginning. You can't just go directly to anal sex without having warmed up a bit first.

Like that. Welcome back.

There are many ways of writing about anal sex and people most certainly have very many questions. To make sure that we answer all of them, we will proceed by using all the interrogatory words.

Anal sex:

What.
Why.
Who.
How.
Where.
When.

Nice and simple. To be completely sure that everyone has the requisite minimum knowledge about anal sex, we will also cover some common myths.

What is anal sex?

Anal sex is a blanket term for stimulation of the region around and inside the anal canal with the intention of achieving pleasure. The stimulation can be done with a penis or a load of other things. Fingers, tongue, a dildo, a vegetable, the tip of the nose. The only limit is your imagination.

Why anal sex?

This question is perhaps best answered in a rather juvenile fashion: Why not? The answer to why one should have anal sex is given: Because one likes it.

Why do people like it? In part because the anuses of both men and women are full of nerves. These nerves can provide pleasure and giving each other pleasure is a form of socialization. For men the prostate gland is an erogenous zone and stimulation can heighten the intensity of orgasm. Then there is of course a psychological component for some. You need not have a biological reason for liking a kind of sex. It can be a matter of sexual fantasies or preferences.

Generally, you can say that people stay together in couples or groups because the partner or group can give you benefits such as security, comfort or pleasure. If giving pleasure is simultaneously pleasurable for the giver, you have a solid win-win situation which is difficult to ignore.

Such win-win situations constitute a large part of the reason why people bother to hang out together in couples or groups, and it has always been this way for our species. In this sense, one could say that anal sex is comparable to other forms of comfort, such as scratching each other's backs, or tickling somebody's arm.

Before a horde of moralizing individuals (such as some adherents of monotheistic world religions) came along with their sin and shame in tow, different forms of sex were far more common. Rules about which gender and which hole you should concentrate on while having sex have in former times been of less importance. And consequently, anal sex was often a completely straightforward act, about which there wasn't all that much fuss.

This information may have been a little difficult to swallow. But every time you think of anal sex as something strange, we want you to remember the following historical curiosity:

Hadrian was a Roman emperor from 117 until 138. He was a highly controversial emperor, not because he was married to a woman and simultaneously travelled around with a 17-year old male lover, but because he had a beard. It was wholly ordinary in Antiquity for soldiers to take younger male lovers. The theory was that it was good for both morale and solidarity. If the former Norwegian Prime Minister Kåre Willoch (the Norwegian version of Emperor Hadrian) had had both a beard and a 17-year old male lover during his reign from 1981 to 1986, we would bet that the majority would haven't given the beard a second thought and instead had a manic obsession with the anal sex.

Different times, different focuses.

Who has anal sex?

Three groups of people have anal sex:

- 1 Those who have an anus and want to stimulate it sexually.
- 2 Those who help somebody they know who has an anus and wants his or her anus stimulated.
- 3 Those who are raped.

In this book, we will restrict ourselves to speaking about the first two groups.

Some people perhaps believe that anal sex is practised exclusively by individuals of certain genders and predilections. They are mistaken. Anal sex is quite widespread, independent of sexual preference and gender. Correct, that means that heterosexual men and woman both practise anal sex.

In an American study, more than 10,000 women between the ages of 15 and 44 were asked whether they had had anal sex in the course of their lifetime and they were asked if they had had anal sex in the past year. The researchers found that 36.3 percent of the women had tried anal sex and 13.2 percent had done so in the past year. They asked the women about a number of other things and learned this: the more often you go to church, the less frequently you practise anal sex.

Beyond such fun facts it isn't all that important for us to have precise figures for how common it is, only to establish that it is extremely common. It is so common and so widely practised that you can't *tell from looking at somebody* whether or not they usually have anal sex. The conclusion for you is nonetheless the same: If you want to try anal sex, go for it. Just do it in a safe way.

Why anal sex?

The first thing you should do before you have anal sex: Talk about it with your partner. There are few people who appreciate being surprised by a thumb up the bum. Talk through how you want to do it and come to an agreement about rules for cleanliness and whether you are going to use a condom.

We are fully aware that it can be a difficult subject to bring up out of nowhere. Sex is often a sensitive subject and we are afraid of appearing strange or that the person we are speaking with will think we are disgusting. So here is a suggestion:

You meet your partner /friend /your anal sex partner of choice for a beer/dinner/walk/sexual intercourse. In the middle of a conversation that can be about food/politics/penile erection you can slip the subject randomly into the conversation by mentioning, for example: "In an American study of American women between the ages of 15 and 44, all of 13.2 percent reported that they had had anal sex in the course of the past year, HA HA HA HA HAA HA!"

It is important to laugh very loudly at the end in case the person you are speaking with thinks this seems like a shockingly high number, so your ass is covered, so to speak. If the person thinks that anal sex is not such a big deal, you can explain that you laughed because the number was so low. Either way you're covered and have brought up the subject in an elegant manner.

Back to how to have anal sex.

It's not a good idea to start by putting something big in the anus. You can tear something back there. Use lots and lots and lots of lubricant. A special anal lubricant, for example, that you can buy at a sex shop by mumbling "Ahem, yes, I want to buy a n a l l u b r i c a n t."

The anal canal is narrow and dry, unlike the vagina, which produces a natural lubricant. You must therefore start gently by stimulating the area around the anal orifice and insert something narrow. A finger for example, so the anal musculature has a chance to relax. Remember: It is always the person being given the finger who decides, not the giver!

Gradually increase the size of that which is to be inserted into the anus. In that way the internal, involuntary sphincter which clenches all the time, will eventually relax. If you start out with a huge dildo, it is guaranteed that you will find that it is difficult to get it in. It can also be painful and will often produce objections along the lines of "Ouch, that hurts!" or "What the hell are you doing?"

Don't forget that you can perform other sexual activities at the same time. You can masturbate, massage the clitoris and carry out all the other sexual activities you otherwise enjoy.

If you are in doubt and forget how to have anal sex, just think of the mountain code. At least five of these rules apply also when having anal sex:

- 1 Plan the trip (into the anus), and let somebody know where you are going (with your penis, fingers, and/or sex toy).
- 2 Adapt the trip according to ability and the conditions.
- 3 Take into consideration weather and avalanche warnings (In other words, diarrhoea.)
- 4 Bring along the necessary equipment (condom and lubricant) to help yourself and others.
- 5 Turn back in time. There is no shame in turning back.

Anal sex when?

When you want to try and add some zest to your sex life? When your fellow or lady friend has nagged long enough? When some celebrity or other speaks about it in glowing terms in the media? When you've watched porn and have become curious? Or maybe you want to put this book down and have anal sex now?

Anal sex where?

Pretty much wherever you want to do it, just remember that some people don't like to see or hear others having sex.

Myths about anal sex

We will now look at six myths about anal sex.

Myth 1

“Having anal sex is unnatural. Whether you listen to God or science: the sexual function of the penis is to fill a vagina and create children.”

If you believe this, you're a knucklehead. (Oh, it is so tempting to stop here, but we will try to explain.)

Unnatural? Well, members of some 1500 different species enjoy anal stimulation. Only one species has members that enjoy homophobia. So you can make up your own mind about what is unnatural.

As far as the God argument goes, we have done a little research and found the solution for this. We actually just spoke with God about it. In other words: we prayed to God, which is the common technique for communicating with deities. Empirically speaking, during the last couple of millenniums the gods haven't shown their cards much and have not been as commanding and active in relation to their creation as they were previously. So in this case we have based our conclusion on the thesis that silence implies consent. It would also appear that it is a very common method in religious communities and if they can, well, then so can we.

In our prayer to God about a potential species-based prohibition of anal sex, we formulated the following prayer:

“Dear God, who presumably art in heaven, hear our prayer. If it is wrong for people or other animals to have anal sex, let it rain burning dildos upon the land and sea for 12 days in a row.”

We repeated this 12 times a day for 12 days in 12 different directions. (A bit unsure about why we chose exactly the number 12, but the exercise gains sort of a spiritual panache when you use a specific number.)

Some people will perhaps protest and say that this business of burning dildos is ridiculous. Well, isn't this an almighty god? If God can create everything and anything, he or she can certainly organize some burning dildos for 12 days as well.

You can imagine the outcome.

We waited and waited. For weeks. Zero dildos. According to our theological interpretation (which is as good as any other theological interpretation) this is a relatively good sign that even God is on board with this anal sex business.

But we will tone this down a bit. We are open to the possibility that we may be wrong. If one day in the near future burning dildos start raining down all over the world for 12 days, this passage in the book will be quite embarrassing and we want to be the first to admit our mistake and will openly recommend that all species stop practising anal sex immediately. We will actually be so generous that if it does rain burning dildos for just one single day, we will admit our mistake.

Myth 2

“Anal sex = homo sex”

Hopefully repeating this is completely unnecessary, but just so we are sure that you know it: Homosexuals are not the only people who like anal sex. The prostate can be felt through the wall of the intestine, a few centimetres up the rectum and some men find it delightful to have it massaged. You are of course not a homosexual for that reason. The clitoris of some women can be stimulated via the anus as well. Other people find that delightful simply because it is delightful and it has nothing to do with either the prostate or the clitoris.

There is never a more correct application of this expression than when we are speaking about anal sex: Different strokes for different folks

Myth 3

“It is painful!”

It *can* be painful, but it is not necessarily painful. If it hurts to put a large object into your behind, then we recommend that you try inserting smaller things. Then there will be less friction and stretching. Less friction can also be achieved by using more lubricant. In general, it is a matter of proceeding with caution, then it tends to go just fine. That doesn't mean that you will find it delightful, because not everybody likes anal sex, but then you can at the very least avoid having it be painful.

Myth 4“There’s poop in there! Gross, dirty and dangerous.”

Let's take a little trip to the anus and rectum, together, to correct this myth. The anus is just an empty tube and the rectum is not responsible for long-term storage of poop. If you have recently emptied your bowels, it should therefore go just fine. You will not be swimming in poop. Having said that, there is of course a good probability of your getting some intestinal bacteria on you. This is unfortunate if you have cuts or sores, but otherwise, you can wash yourself after sex. Or you can use a condom and avoid the problem entirely.

Since we are speaking about hygiene, it is natural to say a few words about rimming. Rimming means licking your partner's anus. The nice word is anilingus, and it can be performed either around the anal orifice or with the tongue inside the anal canal. If you are going to do rimming around the outside of somebody's anus, we recommend washing the region with soap and water ahead of time. If you are going to insert your tongue into the anal canal and want to be completely sure that it's clean, you can rinse it with a clyster syringe full of clean water. Do not inject dishwashing liquid or other cleaning supplies up there; that will only cause trouble.

For those who want to be extra careful, there are special oral condoms or so-called dental dams: special products designed so you can rim your partner while simultaneously creating a barrier to prevent the transfer of micro organisms.

Having said all of this, we must remember one final, important thing. Since there will always be some bacteria, you shouldn't put something that has just been inside the anus right into the vagina or mouth afterwards. This can lead to the transmission of bacteria to places they shouldn't be and cause unpleasant infections.

Myth 5

“If you have lots of anal sex, the anus widens and you will start to leak poop and have to start wearing diapers. The sound of your farts will go from pffrrrr to whoooooh.”

Seriously? You defecate all the time, don't you? So you understand that the anal muscles stretch. Of course, the structures of the anus can tear if you aren't careful. But there is no reason to fear that your entire anus will become “flabby and loose”.

Myth 6

“You have to take poppers, that's what everyone does! Then it's easy to have anal sex.”

First: What are poppers? Poppers are a type of recreational drug that is sniffed into the nose. The substance causes the inner sphincter to relax. (If you are wondering about what the inner sphincter is, is it because you skipped straight to the chapter about sex? Well, you'll have to go back and read the chapter about anatomy.) The muscle is usually tight and prevents you from leaking poop. The same muscle can make insertion of a penis difficult. Poppers became popular in the 1970s and 1980s, to make anal sex easier and were widely used in some sectors of the club culture, especially among men who had sex with other men.

Poppers are not dangerous in and of themselves. The active ingredient, amyl nitrite, has played an important role in medicine. For example, it was formerly used as a heart medicine. Coincidentally, it turned out that this active ingredient also facilitated anal sex.

Amyl nitrite is still used as an antidote for cyanide poisoning. So if you should be unfortunate enough to have ingested cyanide, and just as you start to develop come-hither eyes, you see somebody open a can of amyl nitrite, it is not because they are getting ready to take advantage of the situation by raping you. Just relax, something which will certainly not be a problem since you have ingested cyanide; they just want to save your life.

It is incidentally not the first time a heart medication has improved people's sex lives. Viagra was also intended for use as heart medication, but turned out to have side effects in the form of an erect penis.

The way people get hold of poppers is quite interesting. The active ingredient in poppers, amyl nitrite, is used in a number of cleaning products. In some countries where poppers are illegal, air fresheners are therefore sold containing a ludicrous amount of amyl nitrite. These “air fresheners” smell awful and the majority of those who buy them inhale the scent due to the effect amyl nitrite has on the anal canal. It is a rather cunning way of getting around the drug laws, if nothing else.

Are poppers legal in Norway and would we recommend them? Well, poppers are legally controlled in Norway by the medication list. Amyl nitrite can only be sold by pharmacies and must be prescribed by a physician. All other sale and import into Norway is illegal. In other words: we, the doctors, have the power here. And no, no doctor in his or her right mind will help you get hold of poppers so you can have anal sex. We are sure that you will manage to have wonderful anal sex without them.

Postscript

We hope that you have learned something and we hope that you have laughed. We hope that you have acquired an even more open mind (it must have been a relatively open mind to begin with since you bought this book) and we hope you have become wiser. Not just wiser in the sense of factual knowledge about the anus, but also that you have understood the ideas behind a book about the anus.

There is something exciting and interesting to be found in everything around you. The only limit is your curiosity. There is something to be learned from everything, if you merely have the willingness to seek knowledge from that which appears to be mundane. There is an intrinsic beauty in everything we might mistakenly prejudge as being ugly. Even the most disgusting parts of who we are can become something useful and even the most painful things we experience can sprout and spread goodness.

We suspect that most people, before reading this book, viewed the anus as an irrelevant, disgusting little orifice. We hope we have demonstrated that the anus too can be the root of all manner of goodness in life: laughter, love, community and excitement. Love your anus and love the anus of those around you. Accept your anus and accept the anuses of others, even if they are different from your own. Live every day and appreciate your anus, don't take it for granted.

And when something is so good that no words or actions can describe it, we must express ourselves through art. We will therefore conclude with a haiku.

Lovely, but how fragile.
Rest now, we've reached our journey's end.
Just the two us, anus.

Rashidi and Bergland, 2017