# Probing My Anal Phobia

January 15, 2013 By Mark S. King

My fear of all things anal began when I was an early teen. My older brother David took great delight in bursting into our bathroom to startle me, especially if I was on the john. And, since I was a pubescent redhead, his sudden visits included a lot of laughing and pointing.

I was mortified beyond belief. To this day, I must be sure no one is in the house, and then close and lock the bedroom and bathroom doors before I can properly relax. And I live alone.

But you can't avoid everything anal if you're growing up gay. Not if you want to do the really fun stuff.

Thus my conundrum as a youth: exploring the pleasures of my tush while fighting the terror that something stinky might be going on down there. And I suspect I am not alone in this particular anxiety.

I discovered soon enough that if someone had serious intentions in regard to my backside, I couldn't simply rely upon a bran muffin and a Hail Mary to be properly prepared. God forbid I would, you know, not be... well, you know. This ongoing fear had a habit of wrecking the mood and the evening.

My exclamations during sex were usually panicked calls to turn the lights up, so I could carefully inspect the situation. Or a plea to stop altogether. "Okay, that's fine, no wait!" I would cry out. "Am I okay down there? I mean, is it... okay go ahead... no hold on! Are you sure I'm...?" I was usually so involved with my protestations that I would hardly notice my date gathering his things to leave.

There are cleansing products meant to address this situation, but they require a certain comfort level with your own body and a little patience, meaning, they were incomprehensible to me. But I tried my best.

Drugstore enemas always felt too clinical, like something a nurse should be administering so you could "move your bowels," a phrase I hope I never have to hear again, much less type.

But never fear. Leave it to gay men to popularize the "shower shot," a long hose which screws into your shower head and ends in a narrow nozzle, just right for sliding up your bum for a thorough internal rinse.

The modulation of this instrument, however -- and I cannot stress this enough -- is of utmost importance. Too little water pressure and you've got a dribble with little cleansing effect. Too much, and you've just inserted a pressure washer into your ass that could peel the paint off a building.

I was first introduced to this contraption in my early twenties, when my first-time date invited me to visit the bathroom to “rinse out” while he relaxed in bed and waited. I stepped in the shower and surveyed the dangling metal hose. I turned on the water. I considered how it all might operate, and I made my best guess, standing there for God knows how long, hose inserted and whistling a happy tune.

I must say in my defense that no one had ever explained the device to me, much less how to gauge the input versus the output.

That poor, unfortunate man. He had really pretty designer sheets, covered with a gorgeous blue and white pinstripe blanket that I can still see clear as day. Such a lovely bedroom. That is, until a few passionate moments later, when all of it was soaked with a solid gallon of spoiled water that had been percolating in my poopchute, exploding from me in a streaming rush that looked like the wake of an outboard motor hurtling across Lake Erie. The word “apocalyptic” comes to mind.

Only as I matured did I realize I had options (and I will now introduce cute baseball analogies to illustrate my point). I discovered I did not, in fact, always have to play catcher, and I stepped onto the pitcher’s mound with great enthusiasm. But as much as I enjoyed the view from above, I worried still, that maybe I wasn’t holding up my end of the bargain. It was only after pitching a near-perfect game one day that my partner in the dugout helped me make a simple decision.

“Mark,” he said. “Why don’t you just stick to what you do well?” And it was this generous assessment that gave me the confidence to hang up the hiney hose forever.

Yes, that’s right. I’m now a dedicated top. I’ll allow you a few moments of incredulous wonderment.

What’s even more amazing is my having a boyfriend who is not only loving and adorable, but absolutely expert at the exotic mysteries of booty sex preparation. It really is an impressive talent, if you ask me. Like walking on your hands, or spinning plates on sticks.

This is all to tell you, dear reader, that sometimes you must find solutions to your fears in order to take care of yourself. And sometimes you have to face your damn fears head-on. I was reminded of this recently when, at fifty-two years old, I had my first colonoscopy. I don’t think I have to explain my anxiety level going in to this procedure.

Everything checked out fine, thanks. I had heard the anesthesia they give you can produce some odd behavior, but other than proposing to the physician and asking the recovery nurse if they located my pet hamster, I behaved myself quite admirably.

The only side effect of my colonoscopy was a bloated feeling and a case of the gurgles. Well, and a few hours later I had the longest, most continuous release of gas I have ever experienced in all my days. I’m talking a minute plus, people.

I really wish my older brother David had been here. He loves that kind of thing.

Mark

---

If I can face my deepest fears, so can you. Did you know that studies show people living with HIV have a higher incidence of “colonic neoplasms” (the polyps they are looking for during a colonoscopy), which should be checked out for cancerous cell growth? Anyone aged 50 should get a colonoscopy, and some protocols suggest that people with HIV start this screening at age 45. Please don’t delay. Call your doctor! (At right, a picture of my happy procedure team just prior to my colonoscopy.)

And speaking of rectal douching (and why not? We really should discuss this topic more, considering it is such a common practice among gay men), I cannot say enough about LifeLube, the blog created by the AIDS Foundation of Chicago to help gay men address sexuality and their bodies. They have an entire section devoted to rectal douching (did you know there are new douches that limit the amount of healthy bacteria removed?) and another feature, Andrew’s Anus, that provides engaging answers to the questions you’re afraid to ask. The blog is no longer active - meaning, no new postings - but there is a wealth of information here and you should definitely check it out.

(Artwork courtesy of Andrews’s Anus, via LifeLube.)

---

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/probing-my-anal-phobia