# Will blood in poop go away on its own?

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**Timothy M. Smith**

Contributing News Writer

Every second, Americans ask the internet whether their health is “normal.”

The problem is that the answers they get can be terribly misleading. And that can be dangerous.

Case in point: If you search, “Will blood in stool go away on its own?”, you could come away thinking blood in your stool means you have colorectal cancer when you really don’t. Or you could conclude it’s nothing at all when really you need medication to treat it. Don’t do this to yourself.

The core issue is that the internet doesn’t know you—your medical history, your family history or your lifestyle. But there’s good news: Your doctor does. The American Medical Association (AMA) encourages everyone to talk to their doctor before acting on health information they find online.

## The short answer: It depends

There are many possible causes of blood in your stool. These include:

- Anal fissures: Tears in the opening of the anus.
- Colon polyps: Abnormal growths on the inner surface of the colon, which can often be detected with colon cancer screening.
- Diverticulosis: When small pouches, called diverticula, form at weak spots in the wall of the colon. When these pouches become inflamed, the condition is known as diverticulitis.
- Hemorrhoids: Abnormalities in the blood vessels lining the anal canal.

URL: https://patients.ama-assn.org/public-health/prevention-wellness/will-blood-poop-go-away-its-own
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- Infections: Infections can happen anywhere in the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, and blood can range from bright red to dark black.
- Inflammatory bowel disorders: Examples include Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.
- Injury to the digestive tract: Such as from passing hard stools and straining to pass stool.
- Medications: Including blood thinners and pain medications, such as aspirin and ibuprofen.
- Rectal prolapse: When part of the rectum protrudes through the anus.
- Rectal ulcers: Open sores on or breaks in the lining of the rectum.

With so may potential causes, it’s impossible to know whether blood in your stool requires further work-up or evaluation. In the case of a mild anal fissure, which is a small tear that could happen from passing a hard stool, the bleeding could stop on its own within a few days and not indicate something more serious.

## Don’t be scared—be proactive

It’s true that the color of the blood can sometimes provide a clue about where the blood is coming from—the darker it is, often the higher up in the digestive tract it is originating—but the most important thing to take from having any blood in your stool is that it is never normal. So never ignore it, but also never try to diagnose it on your own. Ask your doctor.

Also, when you do see your doctor, don’t hold back. Mention any other symptoms you have, even if they might seem to have nothing to do with the blood in your stool. For example, are you experiencing any shortness of breath? Mention it. Changes in appetite? Mention it. Discomfort when sitting? Mention that too.

The bottom line: It’s OK to ask health questions online, but for a diagnosis and treatment, see your doctor. The AMA and physicians are trusted sources of evidence-based health and wellness information.

The web has millions of answers. Your doctor has yours.


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