

**Is a DARE necessary?**

A digital ano-rectal exam (DARE) involves inserting a lubricated finger into the anus and applying pressure to feel for any abnormalities or changes over time.

People living with HIV are at an increased risk of anal conditions, including anal cancer. A self-DARE is a simple technique which can be carried out at a time convenient to you and allows for early detection of changes to the rectum, a small number of which could lead to cancer.

People living with HIV should consider carrying out annual self-DARE as part of routine monitoring.

**What is normal for you?**

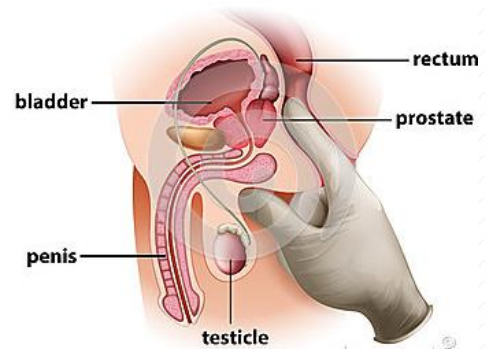
A diary is recommended to help you keep a note of your findings in order to familiarise yourself with your own anatomy, detect any changes early and highlight your concerns to a clinician.

We recommend carrying out a DARE annually and noting down any observations for your own records and to share with your HIV doctor or nurse at your next appointment.

**How do I perform a DARE?**

Lie on your side, with your knees brought up towards your chest or squat down.

1. Inspect and palpate (gently press) the area around the outside of your anus, feeling for any abnormalities.
2. Lubricate your index or middle finger and gently introduce it into the anus until the free space of the rectum is felt.
3. Withdraw your finger slowly until you can feel the anal canal walls.
4. Rotate your finger, feeling the walls of the anus for any lumps, hardening or changes.

**What might I find and what should I do?**

There are a number of different anal conditions which may be encountered during a DARE. Most of these are not cancerous and some findings may simply be a part of your normal anatomy.

Nonetheless, if you identify a lump or thickening of the anal canal, or notice any changes, please make an appointment with your GP. They will most likely perform a DARE to determine the nature of the change and if appropriate, make a referral for further treatment.

Below are some other conditions which you may identify as part of your examination (list not exhaustive):

- Haemorrhoids (piles)
- Warts
- Skin tags
- Enlarged prostate
- Anal fissures (small tears in the lining of the anus)
- Stool(poo)

You may notice some bleeding after performing a DARE, particularly if you have haemorrhoids or anal fissures. Please report this to your GP if the bleeding is significant.

You should also highlight any findings to your HIV doctor or nurse at your next routine appointment.