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**The Anal canal**

* The anal canal is the terminal segment of the large intestine between the rectum and anus, located below the level of the pelvic diaphragm. It is located within the anal triangle of perineum, between the right and left ischioanal fossa. As the final functional segment of the bowel, it functions to regulate release of excrement by two muscular sphincter complexes. The aperture at the terminal portion of the anal canal is known as the anus.

**Functions**

* The external anal sphincter muscle is the voluntary muscle that surrounds and adheres to the anus at the lower margin of the anal canal. This muscle is in a state of tonic contraction, but during defecation, it relaxes to allow the release of feces.
* Movement of the feces is also controlled by the involuntarily controlled internal anal sphincter which is an extension of the circular muscle surrounding the anal canal. It relaxes to expel faeces from the rectum and anal canal.

**Relations**

* The ischioanal fossa are on each side of the anal canal.
* The perianal space surrounds the anal canal below the white line.
* The submucous space of the canal lies above the white line between the mucous membrane and internal anal sphincter muscle.