

Care Gram

Hemorrhoids

What Are Hemorrhoids?

Hemorrhoids are enlarged veins that occur in and around the anus and rectum. These may be outside the anus or actually inside the rectum. Sometimes these hemorrhoids slip to the outside and often can be felt or seen as bumps or knots.

Causes

- The standing position (the blood above the rectum puts pressure on the rectal and anal area)
- Pelvic floor abnormalities
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Pregnancy
- Obesity
- Straining during bowel movements

Symptoms

- Bleeding
- Itching and irritation
- Swelling caused by a blood clot (thrombosis) in the hemorrhoid – this may cause severe pain
- Pain

Treatment

1. Keep the anal area clean and dry. Clean gently with mild soap after a bowel movement. Do not rub. Use soft tissues.
2. Avoid straining with a bowel movement. Eating a high-fiber diet will produce bulk stool that is easy to pass. Also, consume plenty of non-caffeinated liquids.
3. Take a sitz bath with warm, clean water 2 to 4 times daily for 20 minutes. The bath helps with healing and may relieve some of the pain.
4. Some over-the-counter medications, creams, or suppositories may be helpful.
5. In some cases, the doctor might advise having band ligation of the hemorrhoid. A small rubber band is used to "tie off" a swollen hemorrhoid. Infrared light or laser are also procedures used to treat and remove swollen hemorrhoids.
6. Surgery may be advised or considered for certain patients. Potential reasons to have surgery or a surgical procedure are:
 - An acute, painful thrombosis of a hemorrhoid
 - Heavy or constant bleeding of hemorrhoids
 - A history of large hemorrhoids
 - When other treatments do not work
 - Even if you have one of these conditions, you may not need to have surgery



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Prevention

- Eat meals on a regular schedule.
- Eat plenty of fiber, bran, roughage, or take a fiber supplement.
- Keep bowel movements soft and regular – consider using a stool softener if needed.
- Do not delay or try to keep a bowel movement from coming.
- Exercise may help with regular bowel movements.
- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Keep the anal area clean and dry.

Visit your doctor if you have or think you might have hemorrhoids. Your doctor will help you decide the best treatment.