

TO YOUR HEALTH

Hemorrhoids

What Causes Hemorrhoids?

Hemorrhoids are abnormal areas of swelling in the rectum or anal region which is caused by large and dilated veins. Internal hemorrhoids usually appear along the wall of the anus. Most people with internal hemorrhoids are unaware that they are even there. External hemorrhoids are usually visible or palpable as soft pads around the outside of the anal opening. If inflamed or traumatized, hemorrhoids can thrombose or clot. This process is generally associated with pain, swelling, and itching with exposure of a bluish firm tissue from the rectal opening.

Three out of four people will, at some point in their life, develop hemorrhoids. More than 10 million people visit physicians each year in the United States with symptoms related to hemorrhoids.

The causes of hemorrhoids are variable. Individuals who either sit or stand for prolonged periods of time are at risk for developing hemorrhoids due to pooling of blood in the rectal region. Other individuals at risk are those with poor bowel habits, or those who frequently strain to have a bowel movement. In addition, obesity, pregnancy, or chronic constipation or diarrhea can lead to the development of hemorrhoids.

Hemorrhoidal swelling often occurs during difficult elimination when an individual strains to pass the stool. Straining causes swelling of hemorrhoids as hard stool passes over the swollen hemorrhoid causing surface irritation, bleeding and discomfort. Hard stool with straining is a frequent cause of hemorrhoidal inflammation.



Conservative Treatment Of Hemorrhoids

1. Warm baths, soaking to soften hemorrhoidal swelling
2. Use of moist wipes to avoid harsh wiping of anal area
3. Over-the-counter creams to treat hemorrhoids
4. Prescription creams and suppositories for the treatment of hemorrhoids

Beyond Medical Treatment For Hemorrhoids

A number of treatments are currently available for hemorrhoids including hemorrhoidal banding, surgery and HET ablation therapy.

HET Ablation Therapy

A new and innovative non-surgical treatment for hemorrhoids called HET is available at PAGI. The treatment allows the doctor to treat internal bleeding hemorrhoids with a quick, simple, and usually painless procedure associated with rapid recovery. The HET system is a small, disposable tool which applies a combination of gentle tissue compression and controlled heat to significantly reduce the size of internal hemorrhoids.

Please discuss with your health care provider if you are having problems that you believe may be due to hemorrhoids.

Prevention Of Hemorrhoids

Practicing good bowel habits is the initial step in trying to prevent or decrease flaring of the hemorrhoids.

- ✓ Avoid straining to force a bowel movement. Straining increases pressure in the hemorrhoid
- ✓ Respond to the urge to have a bowel movement. Delay in having a bowel movement may decrease the urge to have a bowel movement, and result in stool becoming harder and more difficult to pass later.
- ✓ Do not spend more time than necessary sitting on the toilet. Sitting on the toilet straining for too long will lead to hemorrhoidal swelling.

- ✓ Use only soft, white, unperfumed tissue to cleanse the rectal area. Pre-moistened hypo-allergenic wipes can be beneficial.
- ✓ Adding fiber to the diet and increasing water intake is an important adjunct in the treatment of hemorrhoidal disease, as it can soften the stool and make bowel movements occur easier.

Hemorrhoidal Symptoms

1. Rectal itching, burning, and pain
2. Palpable swelling around the anal area with either blue or red anal tissue pads appearing
3. Blood on toilet tissue or on surface of the stool.



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