HEMORRHOIDS

Treatment and Prevention

While hemorrhoids are uncomfortable, they are not often a sign of something serious or dangerous. There are ways to treat hemorrhoids on your own with over-the-counter products.

If your hemorrhoids do not go away or if you see blood in your stool, tell your doctor right away. A doctor may:

- Look at your anus and feel the inside of the rectum with a gloved finger.
- Place a small tool into the rectum to see hemorrhoids. This is called an anoscopy.
- Look at the anal canal and colon with a flexible scope (colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy).
  - This is needed when internal hemorrhoids cannot be felt with a finger

Treatment

More Fiber

- You may need to increase the fiber in your diet.
- Eat more fresh fruits, leafy veggies, and whole-grain breads and cereals (especially bran).
- Drink six to eight glasses of fluid (not alcohol) each day.
• Your doctor may suggest that you use a supplement that gives you more fiber and softens the stool.
  - Softer stools make it easier to move your bowels and lessen pressure on the veins.

Good Hygiene

• Cleaning well after you have a bowel movement can help treat and prevent hemorrhoids.
• Bathe the anus gently after each bowel movement using soft, moist toilet paper.
• Avoid a lot of wiping.
• If needed, you can even use a bath or shower instead of wiping.
• After bathing, dry the anus gently with a soft cloth or towel.
• To protect against irritation, cleanse the anus gently and apply a zinc oxide paste (or powder) to the area.
• Medicated suppositories or creams can be found at the drugstore, but are mostly meant for external hemorrhoids.
• You can also try cold packs, a tub bath, warm soaks (a sitz bath) or bed rest to help calm pain or swelling.
• Any of these home treatments may help the symptoms, and no other treatment may be needed. If symptoms do not go away, see your doctor.

Procedural Treatments

In some cases, internal hemorrhoids that have fallen outside of the anus (prolapsed) or that bleed too much must be removed. Your gastroenterologist may be able to treat them during an outpatient visit to the office or to the hospital. A number of methods can be used to remove or reduce the number of hemorrhoids. Talk to your doctor about recovery and which option is best for you.
• **Endoscopic:** Your doctor will use a long, thin (about the width of your little finger), flexible tube with a tiny camera on the end to look inside and through which to pass tools. Endoscopic methods use freezing, electrical or laser heat, or infrared light to wipe out the hemorrhoidal tissue.

• **Band ligation:** A rubber band is put around the base of the hemorrhoid, which cuts off blood flow, and the hemorrhoid withers away within a few days. This technique is used only for internal hemorrhoids.

• **Sclerotherapy:** With this, a chemical is injected around the vein to shrink the hemorrhoid.

• **Surgical treatment:** Cutting out the hemorrhoids (hemorrhoidectomy) is sometimes suggested, but carries a painful recovery.

### Prevention

• Pass your bowel movements as soon as you feel the urge.
• Try not to strain to get the stool out.
• Be active. Move around, walk and exercise to help move the stools through your body.
• Stay regular by eating enough fiber and drinking enough fluid. Adding fiber to your diet helps to make stools that are softer and easier to pass.

### Hemorrhoids – What to Know:

- Hemorrhoids are swollen veins found both inside and outside of your anus and rectum.
- Hemorrhoids can be caused by straining when you move your bowels, not cleaning well enough after a bowel movement or sitting on the toilet too long, among other things.
- Hemorrhoids can feel itchy, swollen or may bleed.
- Hemorrhoids are very common and can often be treated with over the counter options.
- Adding more fiber to your diet and making sure you clean well after a bowel movement can help prevent hemorrhoids.