

Hemorrhoids



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

What are hemorrhoids?

Hemorrhoids are veins or blood vessels in and around your bottom that become swollen and irritated. They may be internal or external hemorrhoids or both. Internal hemorrhoids usually do not hurt but they can bleed. External hemorrhoids often hurt.



What causes hemorrhoids?

Hemorrhoids are a common problem. They can be caused by many things, such as:

- Not eating enough fibre
- Spending too long or straining on the toilet
- Getting older
- Lifting heavy objects
- Pregnancy
- Constipation or diarrhea



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF HEMORRHOIDS?

Hemorrhoids can cause itching, swelling, burning and irritation around the bum. They can also bleed when you have a bowel movement and sometimes feel painful.



What can you do to help prevent hemorrhoids?

- Avoid constipation by drinking 6-8 glasses of water daily, exercising regularly, and eating a diet that is high in fibre from vegetables, fruits, whole grains and legumes.
- Do not sit on the toilet for long periods of time (no more than 5 minutes at a time).
- Do not strain or push hard to have a bowel movement or delay bowel movements.
- Be careful to avoid straining when lifting heavy objects.



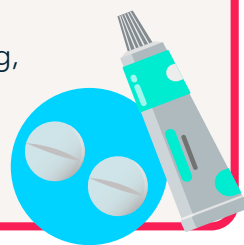
What is the treatment for hemorrhoids?

Increasing fibre intake is the first step to treat hemorrhoids, either through high-fibre foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains, or with fibre supplements. It is important to drink 8 glasses of water per day when increasing fibre intake, and adding fibre to your diet slowly over a few weeks can help avoid pain and discomfort.

Sitting in a sitz bath (a tub of warm water) for 15 minutes at a time 3-4 times a day can help reduce the feelings of itch and irritation. Wiping with a wet toilet tissue and washing the area with mild soap and water after each bowel movement will also help reduce irritation.

Medications may help to control the symptoms of hemorrhoids, but will not fix the problem. Talk to your health-care provider for advice on which product may be best for you.

- Rectal creams and suppositories may help relieve itching, irritation, swelling and pain.
- Acetaminophen can be used if needed for pain relief.
- Laxatives can be used if needed for constipation.



When should you follow-up with your health-care provider?

- You have bleeding from your hemorrhoid or notice blood mixed in your bowel movement.
- You have sharp or severe pain when going to the bathroom.
- The hemorrhoid does not go back in place after a bowel movement.
- The hemorrhoid lasts longer than 7 days.

