

What are Hemorrhoids?

Hemorrhoids are swollen or enlarged blood vessels in and around the anus and lower rectum. There are two types of hemorrhoids: inner or outer.

Internal (inside) hemorrhoids are found in the anus under the lining for the rectum.

An inner hemorrhoid can cause severe pain if it is completely "prolapsed". This means that it is coming out the anal opening and can't be pushed back inside.

External (outside) hemorrhoids are found near the anus. Sometimes a blood clot (**thrombosis**) can happen with outer hemorrhoids. Patients may feel skin tags that develop from stretching of perianal skin.

How do I know if I have hemorrhoids?

Internal (inside) hemorrhoids:

- Painless bleeding.
- Protrusion or prolapsed (coming out) during bowel movements.
- Sometimes very bad pain.
- Mucosal drainage (drainage from the inside lining of the bowel).

External (outside) hemorrhoids:

- Painless bleeding.
- Itching.
- Swelling or hard lump on outside of anus.

Thrombosed (blood clot) hemorrhoids:

- Painful, hard lump.
- Bleeding.

What causes hemorrhoids?

- Repeated straining during bowel movements.
- Pregnancy.
- Age.
- Chronic (long lasting) constipation or diarrhea.
- Hereditary (runs in the family).
- Spending a long time sitting on the toilet (reading).

How can I fix it?

Smaller hemorrhoids can be treated at home with simple treatments:

1. Increase the amount of fiber with a high fiber diet and fiber supplements.
2. Increase fluids in the diet.
3. DO NOT sit on the toilet for a long time.
4. AVOID straining or pushing during bowel movements.
5. Sitz baths – sitting in plain warm water for 10-15 minutes.

With these treatments, the pain and swelling of these smaller hemorrhoids will typically go away in two to seven days. Any lumps should go away in about four to six weeks.

When is surgery necessary?

Surgery may be needed when there is severe or constant pain from a **thrombosed hemorrhoid** (a blood clot within a blood vessel).

Harmful or large hemorrhoids may need special or surgical treatment. The surgical procedure performed depends on the type, size, and location of the hemorrhoid.

1. **Ligation or hemorrhoid banding.**
 2. **Injection and Coagulation.**
 3. **Hemorrhoid stapling.**
 4. **Hemorrhoidectomy.**
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How can I learn more?

You can also find information through the American Society of Colon & Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS) at <http://www.fascrs.org/patients/conditions/>

Do you have any questions or comments for your doctor?
