

Hemorrhoids: Painless Rectal Bleeding

Hemorrhoids are varicose kind veins of the anal area. They are very similar to a surgical glove squeezed in the fingers to make a large bulge. These bulges filled with blood coagulate and form clots. This particular stretching of the blood vessel created pain, and the clot maintains stretching of the vein causing continued soreness. Brand new straining right after initial development of the clot, i.e. from constipation, bowel movements, labour or some other kind of constriction of the stomach can further stretch this already broadened blood vessel and forms a new thin layer throughout the clot increasing the clot dimension causing more and more continued pain.



This thin stretched vessel has pressure receptors in it that are perceived as pressure pain and can be inflamed by sitting, direct trauma, toilet paper or restraining. When you've ever had these, you know how uncomfortable they can be. Also referred to as "piles", they occur for a number of reasons. One cause is gravity. The blood vessels from higher up on the anus start to drop down due to the laxity of the tissue as we grow older. Another cause is the pelvic congestion caused by prolonged sitting, straining with heavy lifting or trying to have a bowel movement, or perhaps by the pelvic congestion of pregnancy. Initial symptoms can be a bit alarming. Maybe it's a small amount of fresh blood on the tissue paper after a bowel movement. Then there is the obscure itching, generalized discomfort and downright pain that can accompany hemorrhoids. Add to that the discovery of "lumps" in the area by the victim, and you have the makings of a panic.

Imagine for a Moment that You are Looking Into the Anal Area Through an Anoscope

There is a circular line around the mucosa where muscle groups attach to the outer anal sphincter called the "dentate" (or "pectinate") line. If hemorrhoids tend to be above the dentate line, they are called "external," and should they be below the dentate line they are classified as "internal." The external ones are more easily seen and felt, while a person may be unaware that they have internal hemorrhoids.

We Do Not Know for Sure What Percentage of the Population Will Get Hemorrhoids

In America the number who present for medical care of hemorrhoids are about 4%. In Great Britain, where they have Socialized Medicine, about 30% of patients present for treatment of this condition. Could in the us that the sale of over-the-counter products for them goes into the billions of dollars.

People who have occupations that require prolonged sitting, for example like truck drivers, get hemorrhoids, as do people who do a lot of heavy lifting. Fighter aircraft pilots get hemorrhoids from gravity and also fighting against G-forces. Pregnant females get hemorrhoids, mentioned above previously, from pelvic congestion, but later from pushing the infant out during the latter part of labor. Probably the most common cause is straining at bowel movement secondary to chronic constipation.

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What are the treatments for hemorrhoids? Well, believe it or not, increasing fiber in the diet is a wonderful treatment for all signs and symptoms.. Stool softeners have not been found to help that much. Dietary fiber decreases bleeding and irritative signs and symptoms. Witch Hazel and glycerin astringent wipes can be very calming to be able to painful hemorrhoids and also can often relieve itching. Sometimes, warm sitz baths several times a day can help, as well as sitting on an inflatable "doughnut" cushion (decreases direct pressure and pinching). If there is an acute clot in a hemorrhoidal vein, it may respond to intermittent ice packs. Occasionally, the E.R. or doctor can make a tiny cut in the hemorrhoid and let the clot away, resulting in great relief as well as ultimate healing.

What are the physician treatment options of hemorrhoids? One of the most effective is the outpatient application of special rubber bands to the hemorrhoids. A patient can have up to three bands a week. A few medical doctors sclerose (inject that with irritant substance to make it shrink) the hemorrhoids by injecting them with 5% greasy phenol, but the results are not as good as with banding.. Some clinics utilize infrared coagulation, cryotherapy (freezing), or various forms of cautery with mixed results. Whenever hemorrhoids are too severe, either open or closed, hemorrhoidectomy will be done in the operating room. The results are generally good, but the time to be able to recovery can be prolonged. There have been some good operative results with simply tying off the hemorrhoidal artery.

“ So, what's the take-home message? Hemorrhoids are the most common cause of bright red anal bleeding, itching and pain, but this simply cannot be assumed in every situation. The doctor is going to have to examine your anus. There are plenty of other things which could cause these symptoms. Please leave your distress in the waiting room and tell the doctor what's been going on. The one thing to remember when sitting in the waiting room is you're not alone, and the more open you are with your doctor the better help he/she can provide for you to acquiring better. If you are over 50 or have risk factors for colon cancer, you probably need anoscopy and colonoscopy. These are very benign tests in this day and age. Once all the more severe possibilities have been ruled out, then you can start a comprehensive program to treat and control hemorrhoids, and you will "live happily ever after."

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