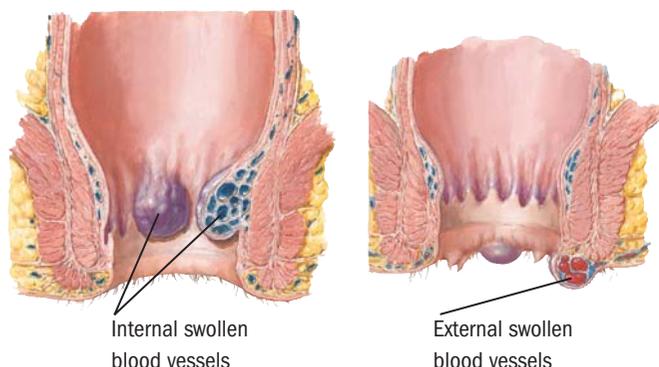
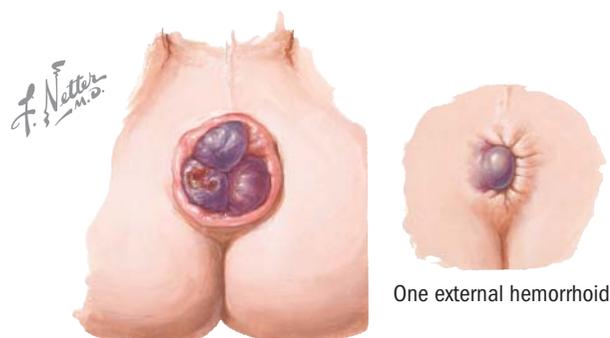


MANAGING YOUR HEMORRHOIDS

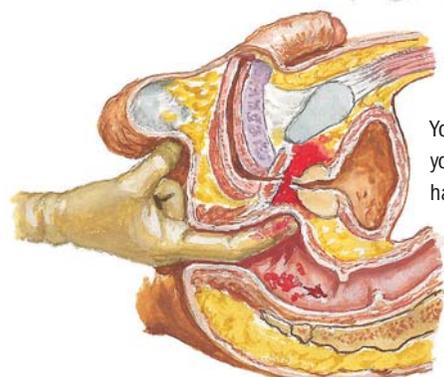


Hemorrhoids, which are inflamed blood vessels, can be inside the anus (internal) or under the skin around it (external).



Hemorrhoids are very common. Increased pressure and straining to move the bowels, as well as other conditions, can cause them.

Symptoms include pain during bowel movements and blood covering stools, on toilet paper, or in the toilet.



Your doctor will examine you to see whether you have hemorrhoids.

What Are Hemorrhoids?

Hemorrhoids (also called piles) are inflamed, swollen blood vessels located in and around the anus and lower rectum. These vessels can stretch under pressure, like varicose veins in the legs. Hemorrhoids are either inside the anus (internal) or under the skin around the anus (external). About 50% of the adult population of the United States, both men and women, have hemorrhoids.

Hemorrhoids aren't usually dangerous or life-threatening. They aren't contagious.

What Causes Hemorrhoids?

Causes include increased pressure and swelling from straining to move the bowel and conditions such as pregnancy and chronic constipation or diarrhea. Heredity and aging are other factors.

What Are the Symptoms of Hemorrhoids?

Many people have hemorrhoids but not all have symptoms. Pain or tenderness can occur during bowel movements. The most common symptom of internal hemorrhoids is bright red blood covering stools (bowel movements), on toilet paper, or in the toilet. Internal hemorrhoids may poke through to outside the body and become irritated and painful. These are protruding hemorrhoids. Symptoms of external hemorrhoids include painful swelling or hard lump near the anus. Straining, rubbing, or cleaning around the anus may cause irritation with bleeding and itching. Draining mucus may cause itching.

How Are Hemorrhoids Diagnosed?

The doctor may suspect hemorrhoids from the symptoms and will make a diagnosis by doing a physical examination. Hemorrhoids can be painless, and the doctor may find them on routine physical examinations.



Creams, suppositories, and stool softeners are used for treatment. For serious cases, surgery can remove or reduce hemorrhoid size. Another method is sclerotherapy (injection of a chemical) to shrink hemorrhoids.



Eat more grains, fruits, and vegetables, and drink plenty of fluids, especially water.



Don't sit on the toilet too long or strain during bowel movements.

Call your doctor if you see blood in your stool or on toilet paper. You should also call your doctor if you have anal pain, burning, or itching.



FROM THE DESK OF

NOTES

How Are Hemorrhoids Treated?

Soft bowel movements are important for preventing and treating hemorrhoids. Eating a high-fiber diet and drinking plenty of fluids are important. Measures to reduce symptoms include warm tub or sitz baths several times a day. Ice packs can help reduce swelling. Cream or suppositories can be applied to the affected area. If hemorrhoids are very inflamed, the doctor may prescribe cortisone cream. Daily use of stool softeners such as docusate during flare-ups helps. Most people get better in about 2 weeks if they follow the doctor's suggestions.

Some hemorrhoids are treated surgically to remove or reduce the size of hemorrhoids. These methods include rubber band ligation, sclerotherapy, electric or laser heat (laser coagulation) or infrared light (infrared photocoagulation), and hemorrhoidectomy. For ligation, a rubber band around the bottom of the hemorrhoid cuts off circulation, and the hemorrhoid goes away. Sclerotherapy uses a chemical to shrink hemorrhoids. For heat and light methods, special tools are used to burn hemorrhoids. Hemorrhoidectomy is surgery to remove hemorrhoids permanently.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Hemorrhoids:

- ✓ **DO** eat more grains, fruits, and vegetables.
- ✓ **DO** drink more liquid, especially water.
- ✓ **DO** remember that many problems in your rectal area have similar symptoms and are incorrectly said to be hemorrhoids. Call your doctor for an examination.
- ✓ **DO** avoid anything that will cause constipation.
- ✓ **DO** remember that straining can make hemorrhoids worse.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you see blood on your stool or toilet paper or in the toilet.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have anal pain, burning, or itching or if you have fever or drainage after surgery.
- ⊘ **DON'T** strain during bowel movements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- American Gastroenterological Association
Tel: (301) 654-2055
Website: <http://www.gastro.org>
- National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse
Tel: (800) 891-5389
Website: <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/digest/nddic.htm>
- American College of Surgeons
Tel: (312) 202-5000, (800) 621-4111
Website: <http://www.facs.org>