



# Hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoids (or piles) are an abnormal swelling in the blood vessels in the anal canal. Although they may bleed, itch or cause pain, hemorrhoids are usually not a sign of anything more serious and you can often treat the symptoms at home. You can reduce your risk of hemorrhoids by making a few healthy lifestyle changes.

## TYPES OF HEMORRHOIDS

**Internal Hemorrhoids** – these usually remain along the anal wall. You probably won't see or feel them, unless they break through the anus. This is known as a protruded or prolapsed hemorrhoid. Symptoms may include pain, bleeding, itching and a feeling of fullness after a bowel movement.

**External hemorrhoids** – these are small soft pads around the anal opening, the same color as your skin. When an external hemorrhoid forms a blood clot (thrombosis), it can appear blue in color and cause severe pain, itching and inflammation.

## CAUSES, TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

One of the most common causes of hemorrhoids is straining to pass hard, dry stools during bouts of constipation. Other factors that can lead to hemorrhoids include:

- Straining to lift heavy objects
- Pregnancy
- Obesity
- Sitting for long periods
- Diarrhea



## WHEN TO SEEK CARE

Generally, hemorrhoids are not serious and symptoms go away in a few days. However, sometimes hemorrhoids may signal a more serious problem. See your health care provider if any of the following occurs:

- Rectal bleeding. Although this is a common symptom of hemorrhoids, rectal bleeding could be a symptom of a more serious disease.
- Persistent pain. In some cases, hemorrhoids must be removed surgically. Your doctor will perform an exam and decide on the best course of treatment.

## TREATMENT

Treating hemorrhoids may require nothing more than home treatment and lifestyle changes. For instant relief of pain, itching and swelling, try the following:

- Apply a hemorrhoidal cream or suppository to the affected area as directed.
- Use ice packs, which can reduce swelling.
- Soak in a warm bath or "sitz" bath (sitting in three inches of water) for 10 minutes a few times a day.

Talk with your health care provider during your next visit. To encourage better bowel movements, your health care provider may suggest some lifestyle changes, such as increasing your fiber and fluid intake and exercise. If these changes do not help, your health care provider may suggest one of the following types of treatment:

- A fiber supplement
- A stool softener

## What You Should Know About FIBER

Fiber is the part of a plant that can't be digested. It adds bulk to keep other foods moving through the digestive system and it holds water which, in turn, softens the stool for easy elimination.

Fiber comes in two different types, both of which are needed for proper bowel function:

- 1 Soluble fiber forms a gel-like material in water. It helps restore regularity and soften stools. Good sources include oats, beans, peas, many types of fruit and products containing psyllium.
- 2 Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water and moves through your digestive system quickly and largely intact. It helps keep you regular by bulking up the stool. Good sources include wheat bran, whole-grain cereals and breads and many types of vegetables.

## PREVENTION

Take the following steps to reduce your risk of hemorrhoids:

- Eat more fiber and drink plenty of fluids. This will help soften stools and promote regular elimination, which reduces straining.
- Go when you feel the urge to have a bowel movement. Delaying now can mean straining later.
- Don't read on the toilet. Sitting and straining too long encourages swelling.
- Wipe gently with soft, white, unperfumed tissue. This helps keep the area clean to avoid irritation.
- Exercise regularly, which aids digestion and improves circulation.





### Easy Ways to Increase Fiber

Adding fiber to your diet may be easier than you think. Here are some tips that can help you get started:

- Substitute high-fiber foods (whole-grain bread, brown rice, fruits and vegetables) for low-fiber foods (white bread, white rice, candy and chips).
- Try to eat raw vegetables and fresh fruit, including the skins, when appropriate. Cooking vegetables can reduce their fiber content, and skins are a good source of fiber.
- Eat high-fiber foods at every meal. Bran cereal for breakfast is a good start, but try to include some fruits, vegetables, whole-grains and beans in your diet as well.



Two notes of caution: be sure to increase your fiber intake gradually, giving your body time to adjust; and drink at least six to eight 8-ounce glasses of fluids a day.

Food	Serving	Fiber Grs/svg	Calories/ Serving	Food	Serving	Fiber Grs/svg	Calories/ Serving
Artichoke	1 globe	6.5	60	Apple with peel	1 med	3.7	81
Asparagus	1/2 cup	1.8	25	Apricots	1 cup	3.7	74
Beans, green	1/2 cup	1.3	14	Banana	1 med	2.7	105
Beans, kidney	1/2 cup	5.7	114	Blackberries	1 cup	7.2	75
Beans, lima	1/2 cup	6.1	85	Blueberries	1 cup	3.9	81
Beans, pinto	1/2 cup	7.4	118	Cantaloupe	1 cup	1.3	56
Beans, white	1/2 cup	5.5	122	Grapefruit	1 med	2.8	82
Beets	1/2 cup	1.6	37	Grapes	1 cup	1.6	114
Broccoli	1/2 cup	2.8	26	Orange	1 med	3.1	62
Cabbage, cooked	1/2 cup	2.1	16	Pear with peel	1 med	4.0	98
Cabbage, raw	1/2 cup	0.8	9	Pineapple	1 cup	1.9	76
Carrots	1/2 cup	2.6	35	Plums	1 med	1.0	36
Cauliflower, cooked	1/2 cup	2.0	17	Prunes, dried	1 cup	11.4	386
Cauliflower, raw	1/2 cup	1.3	13	Raspberries	1 cup	8.4	60
Celery, raw	1/2 cup	1.0	10	Strawberries	1 cup	3.4	45
Corn	1/2 cup	2.0	66	Watermelon	1 slice	0.8	51
Cucumber, raw	1/2 cup	0.4	7				
Eggplant	1/2 cup	1.2	13				
Green Peas	1/2 cup	4.4	62				
Lettuce, iceberg	1/2 cup	0.4	4				
Onions, raw	1/2 cup	1.4	30				
Potato, baked with skin	1/2 cup	1.5	66				
Spinach	1/2 cup	2.7	25				
Tomato, raw	1/2 cup	1.0	19				
Zucchini	1/2 cup	1.3	14				

Food	Serving	Fiber Gra/svg	Calories/ Serving
French bread	1 slice	0.8	68
Rye bread	1 slice	1.6	67
White bread	1 slice	0.6	67
Whole wheat bread	1 slice	2.0	70
Bran cereal	1 ounce	9.7	70
Corn flakes	1 ounce	1.0	110
Oat Bran dry	1 ounce	4.3	69
Oatmeal dry	1 ounce	3.0	109
Shredded wheat	1 ounce	2.8	102
Graham crackers	1 square	0.1	27
Saltine crackers	1 regular	0.1	13
Brown rice, cooked	1/2 cup	1.8	108
White rice, cooked	1/2 cup	0.3	103
Spaghetti, dry	2 ounces	2.1	225
Almonds, roasted	1/2 cup	6.4	351
Peanuts, roasted	1/2 cup	6.1	388

