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## Hemorrhoids

Also called: Piles

### What are hemorrhoids?

Hemorrhoids are swollen, inflamed veins around your anus [<https://medlineplus.gov/analdisorders.html>] or the lower part of your rectum [<https://medlineplus.gov/rectaldisorders.html>]. There are two types:

- External hemorrhoids, which form under the skin around your anus
- Internal hemorrhoids, which form in the lining of your anus and lower rectum

### What causes hemorrhoids?

Hemorrhoids happen when there is too much pressure on the veins around the anus. This can be caused by:

- Straining during bowel movements [<https://medlineplus.gov/bowelmovement.html>].
- Sitting on the toilet for long periods of time.
- Chronic constipation [<https://medlineplus.gov/constipation.html>] or diarrhea [<https://medlineplus.gov/diarrhea.html>].
- A low-fiber [<https://medlineplus.gov/dietaryfiber.html>] diet.
- Weakening of the supporting tissues in your anus and rectum. This can happen with aging and pregnancy [<https://medlineplus.gov/pregnancy.html>].
- Frequently lifting heavy objects.

### What are the symptoms of hemorrhoids?

The symptoms of hemorrhoids depend on which type you have:

With external hemorrhoids, you may have:

- Anal itching
- One or more hard, tender lumps near your anus
- Anal pain, especially when sitting

Too much straining, rubbing, or cleaning around your anus may make your symptoms worse. For many people, the symptoms of external hemorrhoids go away within a few days.

With internal hemorrhoids, you may have:

- Bleeding from your rectum - you would see bright red blood in your stool, on toilet paper, or in the toilet bowl after a bowel movement
- Prolapse, which is a hemorrhoid that has fallen through your anal opening

Internal hemorrhoids are usually not painful unless they are prolapsed. Prolapsed internal hemorrhoids may cause pain and discomfort.

## **How can I treat hemorrhoids at home?**

You can most often treat your hemorrhoids at home by:

- Eating foods that are high in fiber.
- Taking a stool softener or a fiber supplement.
- Drinking enough fluids every day.
- Not straining during bowel movements.
- Not sitting on the toilet for long periods of time.
- Taking over-the-counter pain relievers [<https://medlineplus.gov/painrelievers.html>].
- Taking warm baths several times a day to help relieve pain. This could be a regular bath or a sitz bath. With a sitz bath, you use a special plastic tub that allows you to sit in a few inches of warm water.
- Using over-the-counter hemorrhoid creams, ointments, or suppositories to relieve mild pain, swelling, and itching of external hemorrhoids.

## **When do I need to see a health care provider for hemorrhoids?**

You should see your health care provider if you:

- Still have symptoms after 1 week of at-home treatment.
- Have bleeding [<https://medlineplus.gov/gastrointestinalbleeding.html>] from your rectum. Hemorrhoids are a common cause of bleeding, but other conditions can also cause bleeding. They include Crohn's disease [<https://medlineplus.gov/crohnsdisease.html>] , ulcerative colitis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ulcerativecolitis.html>] , colorectal cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/colorectalcancer.html>] , and anal cancer [<https://medlineplus.gov/analcancer.html>] . So it's important to see your provider to find the cause of the bleeding.

## **How are hemorrhoids diagnosed?**

To find out if you have hemorrhoids, your health care provider:

- Will ask about your medical history.
- Will do a physical exam. Often providers can diagnose external hemorrhoids by looking at the area around your anus.
- Will do a digital rectal exam to check for internal hemorrhoids. For this, the provider will insert a lubricated, gloved finger into the rectum to feel for anything that is abnormal.
- May do procedures such as an anoscopy [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/anoscopy/>] to check for internal hemorrhoids.

## **What are the treatments for hemorrhoids?**

If at-home treatments for hemorrhoids don't help you, you may need a medical procedure. There are several different procedures that your provider can do in the office. These procedures use different techniques to cause scar tissue to form in the hemorrhoids. This cuts off the blood supply, which usually shrinks the hemorrhoids. In severe cases, you may need surgery.

## **Can hemorrhoids be prevented?**

You can help prevent hemorrhoids by:

- Eating foods that are high in fiber
- Taking a stool softener or a fiber supplement
- Drinking enough fluids every day
- Not straining during bowel movements
- Not sitting on the toilet for long periods of time

*NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases*

## **Start Here**

- Hemorrhoids [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/hemorrhoids/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)

Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/hemorroides-es/?adfree=true>]

- Hemorrhoids [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/hemorrhoids>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

## Diagnosis and Tests

- Anal Itching [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/anal-itching/symptoms-causes/syc-20369345?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/anal-itching/symptoms-causes/syc-20369345?p=1>]
- Anoscopy [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/anoscopy/>]  (National Library of Medicine)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/anoscopia/>]
- Flexible Sigmoidoscopy [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/flexible-sigmoidoscopy>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/sigmoidoscopia-flexible>]
- Gastrointestinal (GI) Bleeding [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/gastrointestinal-bleeding>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/sangrado-gastrointestinal>]

## Treatments and Therapies

- Hemorrhoid surgery - series [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100026\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100026_1.htm)] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [[https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp\\_presentations/100026\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100026_1.htm)]
- Horse Chestnut [<https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/horse-chestnut>]  (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)

## Related Issues

- How to Get More Fiber in Your Diet [<https://familydoctor.org/fiber-how-to-increase-the-amount-in-your-diet/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)  
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/fibra-como-aumentar-la-cantidad-de-fibra-en-su-dieta/?adfree=true>]

## Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Hemorrhoidectomy [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Hemorrhoidectomy%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Hemorrhoids [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Hemorrhoids%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

## Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Anatomical distribution of hemorrhoidal piles in advanced disease: clinical insights and... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40696028>]
- Article: The Potential Mechanism of Kushen Decoction in Treating Haemorrhoids: An Integration... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40694626>]
- Article: Ultrasound-guided pudendal nerve block for postoperative pain management in procedures for... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40676415>]
- Hemorrhoids -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Hemorrhoids%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Hemorrhoidectomy%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

## Find an Expert

- American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons [<https://facsrs.org/>]

# Patient Handouts

- Anoscopy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003890.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003890.htm>]
- Hemorrhoid removal - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000674.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000674.htm>]
- Hemorrhoid surgery [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002939.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002939.htm>]
- Hemorrhoids [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000292.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000292.htm>]



## MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Anoscopy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003890.htm>]
- Black or tarry stools [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003130.htm>]
- Hemorrhoid removal - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000674.htm>]
- Hemorrhoid surgery [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002939.htm>]
- Hemorrhoid surgery - series [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100026\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100026_1.htm)]
- Hemorrhoids [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000292.htm>]

## Related Health Topics

- Anal Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/analdisorders.html>]
- Rectal Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/rectaldisorders.html>]

## National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Hemorrhoids* is the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>]

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