

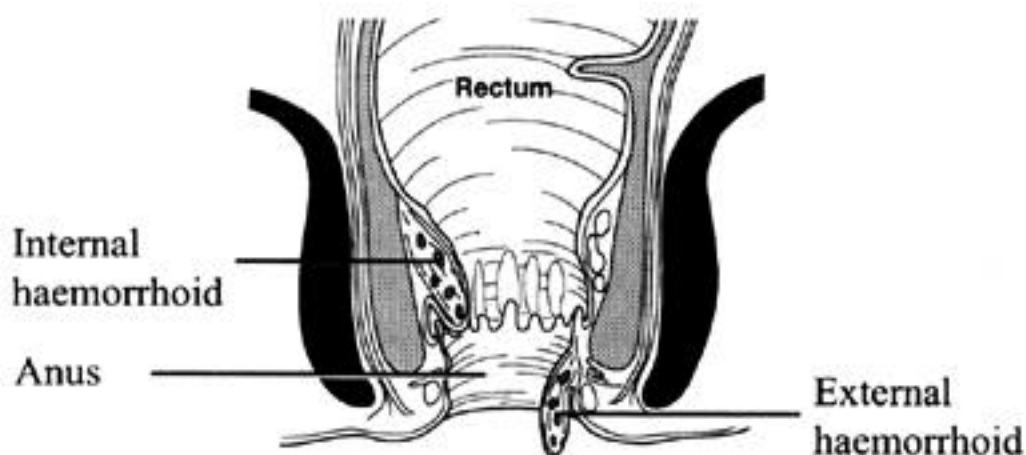
Your Haemorrhoid Operation

Your Questions Answered

What are haemorrhoids?

Haemorrhoids (commonly known as "piles") are swollen blood vessels in the anal canal (back passage) This creates swellings, similar to the varicose veins that some people have on their legs (see diagram). They are very common. One in three people experience haemorrhoids at some time in their life.

The most usual cause is constipation: this is because straining to open the bowels causes congestion of, and eventually enlargement of, the veins in the anal canal. Haemorrhoids also seem to occur more frequently in some families, and are more common during or after pregnancy. They can cause bleeding and discomfort, and may prolapse outside the anal canal.



How will the operation help me?

Your surgeon has advised that your haemorrhoids are severe enough or troublesome enough to need an operation. This operation involves cutting away the swellings, which should alleviate the problems that you have been having.

What preparation is needed before the operation?

You may come into hospital the day before the operation, or on the day of the operation. Increasingly, it is possible to do some haemorrhoid operations as a day case. Usually no specific preparation is needed. You asked some questions

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about your general state of health by the nurses on the ward, and this is a good time to discuss any further questions you have about the operation.

What will happen after the operation?

- You will usually have a dressing in place around the entrance to the anus. This is to control any bleeding in the area. This will feel strange and possibly rather uncomfortable. It may make you feel that you want to open your bowels (although you are not likely to do so).
- Some discomfort is to be expected. Painkillers or local anaesthetic gel are available: please ask your nurse if you need something to help with discomfort.
- You will normally have a bath the next day and this will soak the dressing out (it may need a little gentle pull). It is quite possible that you may bleed a little in the bath (do not be alarmed - this can make the water look very red!). Ask your nurse for assistance if you are concerned.
- Frequent baths can be soothing to the area.
- You may have some stitches that are outside the anus on your skin. All stitches used are dissolvable and so do not need to be removed.
- When you are awake you will be able to eat and drink as you wish, and to get up as soon as you feel able.
- It is advisable to stay on the ward until the effects of the anaesthetic have completely worn off.

How will I open my bowels?

From the day after your operation you will be given laxatives to soften your stools and stimulate a bowel action. You may not feel the need to open your bowels for a day or two. When you do you may experience some discomfort and a little bleeding. This is to be expected. We will aim to control any discomfort by giving you pain killers as you require them (it is a good idea to take pain killers 15-20 minutes before you try to open your bowels).

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Personal hygiene

- It is important to keep the area clean.
- While you are in hospital you should take a bath or shower, or use the bidet after each time you open your bowels.
- You will probably find that a wet cloth, moist toilet tissue or alcohol-free wet wipes are more comfortable than dry paper for wiping (and women should remember to wipe front to back, away from the vaginal area).
- Once you are home, taking a bath every time you open your bowels may become less practical, but you should continue to wash after a bowel action if at all possible for 3-4 weeks after the operation.
- You may find that sitting on the edge of the bath and using a shower attachment (if available) is a convenient way of cleaning the area.

How long will I be in hospital?

If your operation is a day case, you can go home, providing that you are accompanied by a responsible adult, as soon as the effects of the anaesthetic have worn off. Otherwise, we will usually want you to stay in hospital until you are reasonably comfortable when having your bowels open. This is usually 2-3 days after the operation, but this can vary a lot between individuals.

What should I do if I bleed after I go home?

You are quite likely to have a small amount of bleeding from the anus for about a week after the operation. You may notice this particularly on your stool or on the toilet paper when you wipe yourself. This is normal and nothing to worry about. It is a good idea to wear a small pad inside your pants to protect your clothes from any staining.

There is a very small chance of more major bleeding 10-14 days after the operation. If this happens you should seek urgent medical attention.

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How long should I stay off work?

- The time taken to get back to normal activities varies a lot for different people. Do as much as you feel comfortable doing.
- If you need to take painkillers these may make you drowsy, so you should avoid driving or operating machinery.
- If lifting causes you discomfort you should avoid it.
- Most people need a few days off work, but this will depend on what you do, and it is important for you to pay attention to your body, and only do as much as you feel able to.
- You should try to avoid excessive walking or sitting still until your wound has healed.
- It would be unwise to go swimming until the area has completely healed.
- It is fine to resume sexual relations as soon as you feel comfortable.
- Are there any long term effects of the operation?

In a very few cases if someone has weak muscles around the back passage (sphincter) and a tendency to find it difficult to control the bowels, or leakage, this may worsen after the operation. If you find that you are having difficulties you should talk to your doctor. Sometimes exercises to strengthen the sphincter will help.

Can I prevent the haemorrhoids coming back?

Unfortunately, having this operation does not guarantee that your haemorrhoids will never come back. You now know that you have a tendency to develop haemorrhoids, so it makes sense to try to avoid this happening in the future.

The best way of doing this is to avoid straining to open your bowels. If you have a tendency to constipation, try to increase the amount of fibre in your diet. Fibre forms the structure of cereals, fruit and vegetables. It is not completely digested and absorbed by the body, so it provides bulk to the stools. This helps the movement of waste through the intestines, resulting in soft stools which are easy to pass. See below for suggestions on foods rich in fibre.

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- You should increase the amount of fibre in your diet gradually - a sudden increase can cause abdominal discomfort and wind.
- If fibre in your food is not enough to keep your stool soft then consider taking a fibre supplement, such as Fybogel.
- If you become pregnant you will need to take special care not to become constipated.
- It is also important to ensure that you drink plenty of fluid. Try to take at least 6-8 cups of fluid a day.
- The fluid you take can be any type, including water, tea coffee, fruit juice, squash or soup.
- If you feel that you would like further guidance on diet, your doctor may be able to refer you to a dietician.

What should I do if I want further information?

If you have a problem or any questions immediately after you go home please call the ward where you were an inpatient. If a problem occurs after a few days at home, please contact your own family doctor or district nurse for advice.

Foods Rich In Fibre

Beans (including baked beans)

Brown Rice

Fruit (especially if eaten with skin or pips) and dried fruit

Lentils

Nuts

Peas

Seeds

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Vegetables (especially if eaten with skin or seeds, e.g. jacket potatoes)

Wholegrain Cereals (e.g. shredded wheat, weetabix, branflakes, porridge, muesli)

Wholemeal Biscuits (e.g. digestive, rye crispbread, oatcakes)

Wholemeal Bread

Wholemeal Pasta

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