

"A Healthier You"

HEMORRHOIDS

Wellness Rx^{LLC.}
"A Patient-Centered Pharmacy"

FACTS

- Hemorrhoids happen when the blood vessels in the anal canal and anus swell up, stretching the tissues and skin around the vessels (varicose veins of the rectum). **Half of all Americans will suffer from hemorrhoids at some time in their life.**
- **Repeated constipation** (or other problems in the colon or GI tract) is the number one cause of hemorrhoids. The resulting straining of the blood vessels can then push the bulging veins to the outside of the anus. If the constipation is hard enough and lasts long enough, the tissues can crack and bleed and even become infected.
- **Internal hemorrhoids** are the most common type. They are not painful, but they do sometimes bleed and the bright blood can drip into the towel causing concern. Internal hemorrhoids may bulge out of the anus when one strains to have a bowel movement but they stop bulging outside when one stops straining.
- **External hemorrhoids** have two grades: grade 1 is when the hemorrhoid pops outside the anus on their own but can be shrunk back inside with basic treatment; grade 2 is when the combined internal and external hemorrhoids become prolapsed and cannot be reduced or shrunk back inside.
- **Pregnant women** are especially prone to hemorrhoids due to the heavy pressure that bears down on the lower bowel.
- **Early treatment or intervention is key to long-term success.** Untreated hemorrhoids will begin to bleed and the pain will increase. The vein that bulges outside the anus can become strangled. The blood then dries and a small sac of hard dried blood develops on the anus. **Infection or regular bleeding requires a visit to the doctor.** In severe cases, surgery may be required to remove the complete hemorrhoid (hemorrhoidectomy).

PREVENTION

The best way to avoid hemorrhoids or a flare-up of a history of hemorrhoids is to develop lifestyle habits that reduce the pressure, stretching & damage to the anal canal.

1. **Adequate hydration** to keep the entire body functioning (8 glasses of clean water daily or 64 ounces).
2. **Adequate fiber** to keep the alimentary canal from getting clogged (25 to 30 grams of dietary fiber every day).
3. **Daily walk or exercise program** that helps the body keep pumping along and the muscles to keep the system moving along.
4. **Anal hygiene** which involves wiping with soft undyed toilet paper, keeping the area clean either with a warm damp facecloth or a cleansing tissue.
5. **Avoid standing or sitting** too long whenever possible.

TREATMENT

- **An Epsom salt “Sitz Bath”** (a bathtub with a couple of inches of water) is ideal for settling down the pain & itch of external hemorrhoids. Try a **hot water bath** three times a day for 20 minutes each for best results. This will help with blood flow & the shrinking of hemorrhoid(s) Alternatively, a soak in a regular bath with Epsom salts or baking soda will also calm sore anal tissue.
- **Cryotherapy** or cold treatment is the process of freezing the hemorrhoid with an Ice Pack (over a towel; not directly on anal area) **Freezing immediately reduces pain and swelling.**
- **Use a natural hemorrhoid cream** to lubricate bowel movements and use a gentle moist, hygienic wipe rather than rough toilet paper if the anus is inflamed.
- **Use a lubricated finger** to gently **push the swollen veins back inside the rectum.** This protects against external abrasions and sometimes reduces the pressure to help with shrinkage.
- **Avoid foods and drinks that can dehydrate** you especially during an acute episode (coffee & alcohol). Eggs & red meat are high in protein and can cause constipation. Sweets can overwork the liver and put extra stress on ones bowel. Spicy foods will create spicy stools which will increase the burning sensation.
- **Berry juices**, especially dark berries such as blackberries and blueberries, can help reduce the pain of hemorrhoids since they contain natural **anti-inflammatory agents & secondarily help to strengthen vein walls. Cranberry juice** is particularly good too.
- **Ginger, garlic and onion** all have the ability to break down fibrin which can then repair damaged body tissue, including arteries. Anal arteries are sensitive to high levels of fibrin in the blood stream.
- **Oils such as olive oil and flax seed** keep ones insides functioning smoothly especially the bowels. **Psyllium** added to soups or taken in capsule form is an excellent bulk-forming fiber which helps to restore bowel regularity.
- **OTC suppositories** help to sooth the anus and the lower part of the anal canal (use a panty liner to prevent soiling of undergarments). **Creams and ointments** can best be applied with ones fingers to cover the entire affected area. **Early treatment** at the first sign of a problem produces the best results. OTC treatments contain some or all of these elements - local **anesthetics** to dull pain & itching, **vasoconstrictors (phenylephrine)** to shrink blood vessels, **protectants (i.e. cocoa butter & glycerin)** to protect from irritation, **astringents (i.e. witch hazel)** to aid in healing, antihistamines (pramoxine) and **corticosteroids** to help with inflammation.
- **Natural and herbal medicine products** are also widely used throughout the world to help prevent and treat hemorrhoids. In addition to aloe vera, witch hazel and tea tree oil which can sooth the affected area, horse chestnut strengthens vein walls, barberry tones body tissues, butcher's broom constricts the veins, psyllium seed creates bulk and others such as St. John's Wort, Comfrey root power and dandelion keep one's system functioning well.

With all OTC or prescription-only medications, be aware of **potential side effects. Breaking out in a rash** around and inside the anal and rectal area can be a sign of an **allergic reaction** to one or more of the ingredients in a product. While **irritation of swollen and bleeding rectal tissue** may occur within the first few days of using a product, this should not continue for an extended period of time. Reduction of swollen veins in the rectum can **raise or cause high blood pressure.** Individuals with high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney disease or heart problems should check with their physician before using products with phenylephrine or the herb butcher's broom.

PRODUCTS

- **Medicated Cooling Pads (Tucks; T.N. Dickinson's; Preparation H Wipes)**: Extra-soft pads saturated with all-natural **witch hazel (50%)** and often **Aloe Vera**. The witch hazel works externally as a safe and effective itch-relieving astringent. The Aloe Vera creates a temporary protective coating that reduces dryness and irritation. Aloe Vera also has anti-inflammatory properties & witch hazel works internally to strengthen vein walls. Pads are best used **after each bowel movement**, can be folded and used as a compress & are safe for cleansing vaginal areas or relieving discomfort following childbirth or vaginal surgery.
- **Preparation H Suppositories**: A well known solution for hemorrhoidal symptoms especially for internal hemorrhoids and the **nighttime relief** from the pain of irritated tissue. Each suppository contains cocoa butter and shark liver oil as protectants and phenylephrine as a vasoconstrictor. In addition to bedtime, it's ok to use in morning and after each bowel movement after washing (max. of four suppositories daily). Suppository can be inserted while standing, sitting or lying down. Generic brands of product are available.
- **Preparation H Ointment & Like-Kind Products**: Ointments are mineral oil; phenylephrine and petrolatum based. **Creams** are glycerin, phenylephrine; pramoxine and white petrolatum based. **Cooling gels are comprised of** witch hazel (50%) and phenylephrine.
- **Venapro**: A homeopathic treatment that uses witch hazel and natural herbs like **horse chestnut** (aescin is the active ingredient) which reduces inflammation and strengthens vein walls & **stone root** which makes bowel movements better and more frequent) and minerals to minimize pain, relieve symptoms and prevent hemorrhoids from returning. Venapro is administered by spraying it under your tongue three times a day (fast acting; avoids stomach destruction) and treatment often requires 4-6 months for maximum results. A similar natural product in suppository formulation is **Avenoc**.
- **Avatrol**: Another natural product that includes horse chestnut, butcher's broom (anti-inflammatory), arginine (relaxes muscles), oat straw (reduces digestive tract irritation), casara sagrada (natural laxative) & bilberry (repairs damaged tissue). As with most natural herb products, best results are seen after taking the product for 45-60 days.
- **Life-Flo Hemorrhol**: A natural cream free of synthetics. The active ingredients are witch hazel, cod liver oil (enhances healing), glycerin and a long list of old inactive herbal medicines'. Glycerin soothes the irritated area and lubricates the anal region to help with the passing of stools. The cream is absorbed into the skin **immediately and is non-greasy when applied directly to the rectal area**.
- **Amoils Heal Hemorrhoids**: contains 100% natural ingredients that come from **pure essential oils extracted from organic plants**. The liquid product is applied directly to the hemorrhoids and **relief is instant** because the oils are soluble with human tissue. Swelling will be reduced in hours while the elimination of most hemorrhoids will take weeks of daily use according to the makers of the product.
- **Nelsons H+Care Cream**: An old British topical herbal remedy that includes horse chestnut, witch hazel and calendula or the flower petals of marigolds (antioxidants helps damaged cells; anti-inflammatory). Another plant based product is **Neo Healer** which contains aloe vera, lupin (powerful essential oil extract or antioxidant that speeds tissue healing), vateria indica (tree resin with anti-inflammatory properties) and mentha piperita which reduces pain and itching.
- **Zenmed Ensa**: Capsules that contain 20 herbal ingredients (includes aloe vera, psyllium, cascara sagrada, golden seal and lactobacillus acidophilus) designed to stimulate the bowels to produce healthy movements and heal any damages tissues (especially effective at targeting inner layer of skin where true healing begins).

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