

Emergency Department Hemorrhoids

General Information

Hemorrhoids, or piles, are swollen veins in the lower rectum and anus. They can cause itching and pain, sometimes they can also make you bleed during a bowel movement. The most common cause is straining during bowel movements. This usually is a result of constipation or persistent diarrhea. Pregnant women and persons who are overweight or sit for long periods often get hemorrhoids. Hemorrhoids usually aren't serious, although they can be quite painful. If your symptoms are severe, your doctor may suggest that you have the hemorrhoids removed.

Instructions

1. To reduce pain and swelling:
 - a) You may use medicine such as hemorrhoid ointment, cream or suppositories, and stool softeners that you can buy without a prescription. Speak to a pharmacist, and then follow the directions on the label.
 - b) Sit in a tub of comfortably warm water for 10–15 minutes, up to 3 times a day. Do not add soap, bubble bath or anything to the water.
2. To prevent hemorrhoids from reoccurring, try to prevent constipation:
 - a) Eat a high-fiber diet. Good choices are fruits and vegetables, oat and bran cereal, whole-grain bread, and brown rice.
 - b) Drink plenty of liquids, especially water. Avoid coffee, tea and alcohol.
 - c) Take medicines called stool softeners or bulk forming laxatives. You do not need a prescription for these. Speak with a pharmacist and follow packaging instructions.
 - d) Do not try to hurry bowel movements. Do not strain to push the stool out.
3. You may do normal activities if you are not in pain. Avoid sitting or standing for a long time. If the hemorrhoid is painful, sit on a donut cushion or lie down.

Return to Emergency if any of the Following Develop:

- You have rectal bleeding that is more than a trace or streak on the toilet paper or in the stool.
- Your bowel movements become black or are like tar

Contact your Family Doctor if any of the Following Develop:

- Your hemorrhoids cause severe pain that is not relieved by the above measures.
- You notice a hard lump develops where the hemorrhoid has been.

For more information contact the BC NurseLine by dialing 811

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