

MANAGING HEMORRHOIDS

Hemorrhoids (piles) are swollen veins in the anus. They are usually caused by increased pressure such as straining when you have a bowel movement at any time, or during the last three months of pregnancy.

The medication prescribed by your physician should relieve your hemorrhoids in a couple of weeks. But along with your treatment, you can also take simple precautions to ease pain, itching and soreness and most of all prevent hemorrhoids from recurring.

- Keep the anal area clean and dry.
- Use wet cotton instead of toilet paper and wash your anus gently after each bowel movement.
- Pat, don't rub to dry yourself.
- Use a little unscented talcum powder to keep the area dry.
- Avoid laxatives and purgatives. They make hemorrhoids and their symptoms much worse.
- Never strain to pass a stool. This makes hemorrhoids protrude even more.
- A stool softener such as Surfak is helpful because it produces bowel movements that do not irritate hemorrhoids or fissures.
- To relieve pain and inflammation try a hot water bath with a couple of tablespoons of salt in it. Hot compresses or ice may also help.

YOUR DIET AND HEMORRHOIDS

The food you eat affects the stools you pass. To produce firm but soft stools, you should:

- Eat fresh fruit and vegetables and add fiber such as bran to your diet.
- Drink lots of water.
- Avoid highly spiced or fried foods.
- Cut down on alcohol.

A FINAL WORD

If you still have pain, bleeding or discomfort after you finish the treatment, tell your physician. If you have fresh bleeding or black tarry stools at any time, report it to your physician immediately.