

Helpful Hints for Hemorrhoids and Fissures

Home Treatments:

- Warm baths or sitz bath. Soak your anal area in plain warm water for 10 – 15 minutes two to three times a day. A sitz bath fits over the toilet.
- To reduce pain and swelling of a protruding hemorrhoid, apply ice packs to the anal area for a few minutes.
- After a bowel movement, it may be less irritating and painful to wipe with cotton balls soaked in water, rather than toilet paper. Tucks™ pads or the generic equivalent are also a helpful choice. Avoid perfumed or colored toilet paper. A soft facial tissue coated with moisturizing cream may be helpful.
- During a bath or shower, wash outside the anal area very gently, applying Balneol cream (not soap) with your fingertips or wet cotton ball. Pat the area dry. Avoid rubbing with a washcloth or towel.
- Try lubricating the inside of your anus with a dab of petroleum jelly to help your stools pass more smoothly.
- Use topical treatments. Apply an over-the-counter hemorrhoid cream or suppository containing hydrocortisone. A cream may be applied with a cotton ball, cotton swab, or your finger. You can keep your hand clean by keeping it inside a plastic bag or a rubber examination glove (available at many drugstores and supermarkets). You may try Anusol cream, which has a different ingredient from Preparation H. Note that stronger creams and suppositories may require a prescription.
- Witch hazel is reputed to reduce pain, itching and bleeding until the hemorrhoids heal. Put the bottle of Witch Hazel in a bucket of ice before applying for best results.
- Try an herbal remedy – two capsules (375 mg each) of stone root twice a day with a glass of water may be helpful for hemorrhoids.
- Try lining your underpants with a panty liner if you have a rectal discharge (Light Days is a good brand and may even be used by men). Additionally, in the morning and at bedtime, apply a thin piece of cotton torn from a cotton ball just outside the anal area.

Prevention:

- Eat high-fiber foods. Eat more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Doing so softens the stool and increases its bulk, which will help you avoid the straining that can worsen symptoms from existing hemorrhoids. Add fiber to your diet slowly to avoid problems with gas.
- Minimize salt, coffee, spicy foods, beer, and cola. Some may also benefit from avoiding citrus fruits/juices, dairy products and any products that may cause bloating/gas.
- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day to help avoid constipation.
- Avoid straining to push bowel movements and avoid prolonged toilet sitting.
- Avoid vigorous wiping after bowel movements (to decrease irritation).
- Avoid heavy lifting and strenuous exercise.
- Do not scratch.