

# Haemorrhoids and Banding

## What are haemorrhoids?

Haemorrhoids or 'piles' are swollen blood vessels in the back passage. This creates swellings similar to varicose. One in three people experience haemorrhoids at some time in their life.

## What are the symptoms of haemorrhoids?

Symptoms can include:

- itching around the back passage,
- bleeding from the back passage after a bowel motion,
- discomfort or ache around the back passage and lower bowel (rectum),
- pain during and immediately after a bowel motion,
- visible swelling around the back passage
- feeling that your bowels have not been completely emptied.

## What causes haemorrhoids?

Constipation, pregnancy and childbirth, obesity and straining (e.g. heavy lifting or vomiting) can contribute to the development of haemorrhoids. However, the most usual cause is constipation. This is because straining to open the bowels causes congestion and eventually enlargement of the veins in the back passage.

Haemorrhoids also seem to occur more frequently in some families and are more common during or after pregnancy.

Sitting on cold, hard surfaces, standing for long periods of time and doing sedentary work does not cause haemorrhoids.

## What treatments are available?

There are a number of different treatment options including injections, banding and surgery. The healthcare professional who examines you will discuss with you what he/she thinks the best treatment option is for you. Banding is the most common treatment used.

## What is banding of haemorrhoids?

This involves using a small instrument to put a very tight elastic band over the haemorrhoid. This band cuts off the blood supply so the haemorrhoid should pass down the toilet with a motion, usually within 3-7 days after banding.

## Are there any complications?

Complications following banding of haemorrhoids are extremely rare. There can be major bleeding afterwards. If you see a lot of fresh bright red blood or pass clots you should seek urgent medical attention.

## What should I expect after banding of haemorrhoids?

You may experience very slight pain, discomfort or a feeling of fullness in the back passage for a day or so after banding. You should take your regular painkillers (such as paracetamol) if you need to. Very rarely these do not work effectively and you

may need to ask your Pharmacist or contact your GP for something stronger.

After your treatment you may feel that you want to open your bowels. Usually this feeling wears off after a time. If you find it necessary to open your bowels do not worry but avoid straining and eat normally.

- Avoid using any applications or creams directly into the back passage.
- Avoid strenuous exercise for the rest of the day. For example, avoid playing sport, jogging or riding a bike.
- You can bath or shower as you wish.
- You should be able to get back to your normal life as soon as possible.
- If you are concerned about your bowel movements you should contact your GP.

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

- A small amount of bleeding on your stool or on the toilet paper when you wipe yourself is normal. You may notice bleeding when the haemorrhoids fall off, leaving a small raw area inside the back passage (usually about 1 week after banding). You will not see the haemorrhoids or bands, as they will pass down the toilet with a motion.
- Very rarely there can be more major bleeding. If you see a lot of fresh blood or pass clots you should seek urgent medical attention.

### **Can I prevent the haemorrhoids coming back?**

There is no guaranteed way of preventing haemorrhoids but a high fibre diet will help keep your stools (faeces) soft, reducing your risk of becoming constipated. This will ensure that you avoid straining to pass a stool, which is the primary cause of haemorrhoids.

General recommendations include:

- eating plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables - at least five portions a day.
- cutting down on fat (particularly animal fat), sugary food, and refined and processed food.
- eating plenty of pulses such as peas, beans, and lentils.
- eating plenty of wholegrain foods such as wholemeal bread, pasta and breakfast cereals.
- drinking plenty of fluids - you should drink 1-2 litres (6-8 glasses) of water every day in order to keep your faeces soft.
- if you drink alcohol do so in moderation.

If you already have haemorrhoids, eating a high-fibre diet can help ease your symptoms. It will also prevent constipation and stop you straining to pass a stool, which can make your haemorrhoids worse.

### **Foods rich in fibre**

- Wholemeal bread.
- Wholegrain cereals (e.g. shredded wheat, weetabix, branflakes, porridge, muesli).
- Wholemeal pasta.
- Brown rice.
- Beans (including baked beans).
- Peas.
- Lentils.
- Wholemeal biscuits (e.g. Digestive, rye crisp bread, oatcakes).
- Fruit (especially is eaten with skin or seeds, e.g. Jacket potatoes).
- Nuts, seeds and dried fruit.

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 (you can buy this at the chemist or your doctor can prescribe it).

If you become pregnant you will need to take special care not to become constipated.

If you feel that you would like further guidance on your diet, your doctor may be able to refer you to a dietician.

## Further information

You can get further information locally from the Customer Services Department:

Tel: 0151 529 3287

(answer phone 0151 529 2400, fax 0151 529 2019, text phone 0151 529 2523)

You can also get further information from:

- British Society of Gastroenterology at [www.bsg.org.uk](http://www.bsg.org.uk)
- Digestive Disorders Foundation at [www.digestivedisorders.org.uk](http://www.digestivedisorders.org.uk)
- NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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