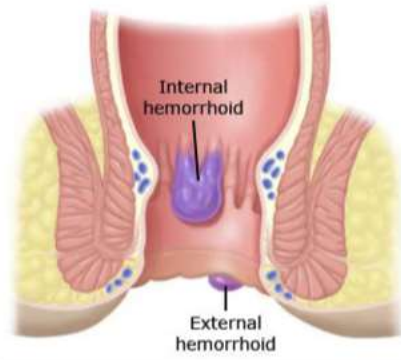


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**What are hemorrhoids?** — Hemorrhoids are swollen veins in the rectum. They can cause bleeding during a bowel movement, often on the toilet paper or dripping into the toilet bowl.

In some cases, you can see or feel hemorrhoids around the outside of the rectum. In other cases, you cannot see them because they are hidden inside the rectum

**Treatment of hemorrhoids?** There are different options available. Treatment depends on how the hemorrhoids look and how much the hemorrhoids are bugging you. Often the most important thing is to make sure that the symptoms are caused by hemorrhoids and not by something else. Often this requires a colonoscopy

### **Conservative management**

This is the most common form of treatment for hemorrhoids. This comes with the least risk and least discomfort of other treatment options. The goal is to focus on good bowel habits. We aim for 1 or 2 bowel movements per day, movements should be formed, not hard and not loose. There should be no straining on the toilet, and trips to the washroom should be less than 5 minutes. To achieve these goals I recommend:

- Increased fluid and fiber
- Metamucil (psyllium fiber) 1 tablespoon daily mixed in with a glass of water or orange juice
- Over-the-counter laxatives like: Lax-a-day, milk of magnesia, lactulose

For other symptoms of hemorrhoids, some people feel better if they soak their buttocks in 2-3 inches of warm water. This can be done up to 2-3 times a day.

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## **Rubber band ligation**

This involves placing a small rubber band around the base of the hemorrhoid. This cut off the circulation to the hemorrhoid, it falls off 7-10 days later. This leads to scarring that prevents further prolapse or bleeding. This only treats hemorrhoids on the inside and not hemorrhoids on the outside.

This is done in the endoscopy clinic, and can be done at the same time as a colonoscopy.

Banding has a success rate of 70–80%. However, multiple sessions of banding are often needed, sometimes up to 5 sessions. At the first session only one band will be applied, after that 2 or 3 will be applied at each session.

After the banding procedure it is not unusual to have some mild pain or fullness in the rectum. Banding is very well tolerated. There is a risk of some bleeding, often 7-10 days later when the band falls off. Occasionally the bleeding may be severe and require a return to the hospital.

There is an extremely rare complication of a banding that can lead to severe infection.

## **Surgery**

Surgery for hemorrhoids comes with high satisfaction rates. It treats both internal and external hemorrhoids. This is usually done as a day procedure.

While the risk complications of hemorrhoid surgery are low, pain and discomfort are very common lasting between 2 and 4 weeks. This requires at least 2-3 weeks off of work for recovery.

Surgery is reserved for those in which conservative management or banding has either failed or is not an option.

Side effects include:

- Urinary retention (difficulty passing urine)
- Bleeding
- Anal stricture
- Mild changes in continence