



Understanding **HEMORRHOIDS**

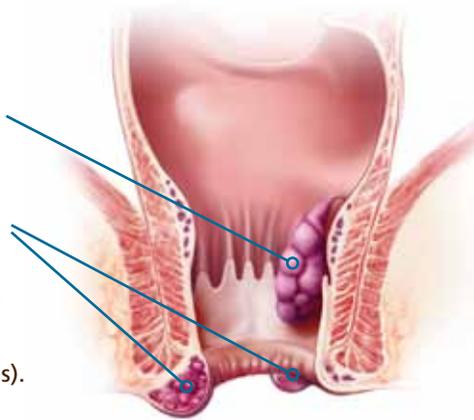
What are hemorrhoids?

Hemorrhoids are typically caused by repeated or constant pressure to the anal or rectal veins. As pressure increases, blood begins to pool, causing veins to swell. The swollen vein(s) begins to stretch the surrounding tissues, creating a hemorrhoid. Although hemorrhoids can be painful, they are not serious and are quite common. Between 60 and 70 per cent of Canadians will develop hemorrhoids at some point in their lifetime. At least 50% of people over the age of 50 will experience hemorrhoids and there is an increased likelihood for pregnant women to develop hemorrhoids.

There are two types of hemorrhoids, internal (found in the lower rectum) and external (found under the skin around the anus).

It is possible to experience external and internal hemorrhoids at the same time.

Internal hemorrhoids are found inside the lining of the rectum. You cannot feel them unless they are unusually large. Typically small and painless, internal hemorrhoids can produce streaks of bright red blood, which you will see on toilet paper or on stool after a bowel movement. Some people may experience larger internal hemorrhoids, which sag and bulge from the anus, these are called prolapsed hemorrhoids. These larger hemorrhoids can cause some irritation, but often tend to recede into the rectum and resolve without treatment.



External hemorrhoids are found beneath the skin of the anus and can be painful. External hemorrhoids looks and feel like a hard lump in which occurs when the blood clots and within a protruding external hemorrhoid. This can result in a painful thrombosed external hemorrhoid which looks bluish-purple and can bleed, but again tends to clear up on its own within a week or two.

What are the symptoms of hemorrhoids?

You may have a hemorrhoid if you notice:

- Small amounts of bleeding during bowel movements, especially if straining
- Itching or irritation from bulging hemorrhoids
- Pain or discomfort in the rectum
- Soreness or pain when cleaning the anal area
- A lump close to the anus, which may be painful or sensitive
- Stool leakage

What causes hemorrhoids?

There are many factors that may increase your risk of developing hemorrhoids:

- Low fibre intake in your diet
- Obesity
- Straining during a bowel movement
- Chronic constipation or diarrhea
- Sitting for long periods of time on the toilet
- Rushing to complete a bowel movement
- Pregnancy
- Anal intercourse
- Alcoholism
- Illness; long-term heart or liver disease which can cause blood pooling in the abdomen and pelvic area

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What are the risk factors for hemorrhoids?

Sometimes, although rare, complications may arise from bleeding hemorrhoids. Anemia occurs when the red blood cell count is lower than normal, and can develop when you continually lose blood. Symptoms of anemia include fatigue and weakness.

Another complication is a strangulated hemorrhoid. When the blood supply to a hemorrhoid is cut off, the hemorrhoid may become strangled, which causes severe pain and tissue death.

If bleeding from hemorrhoids continues without improvement for more than one week, you should contact your physician.

How are hemorrhoids diagnosed?

A doctor can diagnose hemorrhoids by taking your medical history and conducting a physical exam. This may include a digital rectal exam (inserting a gloved finger into the rectum) to check for internal hemorrhoids, as well as conducting an anoscopy (inserting a small tubular instrument to examine the anus) or proctoscopy (inserting a small tubular instrument to examine the anal cavity, rectum or sigmoid colon). If traces of blood are found in your stool, your physician may request a flexible sigmoidoscopy (a flexible tube that looks at the anus, rectum, and lower intestine) or colonoscopy (a thin, flexible tube that looks at the inner lining of the large intestine) to rule out other possible conditions.

If hemorrhoids are present, your physician will evaluate the location and size of the hemorrhoid(s) and develop a treatment plan, based on severity, and what's best for you.

How are hemorrhoids treated?

Treating and preventing hemorrhoids can often be done on your own by making simple lifestyle and dietary changes, these include:

Increasing fibre: Too many of us don't eat enough fibre. Eating a diet rich in fibre, along with adequate, non-caffeinated fluids, will help soften stools and make them easier to pass. High fibre foods

include: beans, broccoli, oat bran, and fresh fruits. However, be aware that increasing fibre too quickly can cause bloating and gas, so start slowly and increase your fluid intake at the same time. You should aim for a maximum of 25-30 grams of fibre a day.

Exercising: Moderate exercise is good for your heart, bones, muscles, mental health and can help stimulate bowel function. The recommended level of physical activity for adults is 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity plus 2 hours of muscle training per week. The 150 minutes of weekly physical activity can be broken out into shorter bouts, at least 10 minutes each, spread throughout the week: e.g. 30 minutes of moderate-intensity activity 5 times per week or no less than 20 mins a day.

Hemorrhoid care: Should you have a hemorrhoid, try to avoid rubbing the area. You can clean the anus with a piece of moist toilet paper and gently pat dry. Use non-fragrant soaps with no dyes, and wear cotton underwear to prevent moisture build-up.

Home treatment

Treating mild cases of hemorrhoids can often be done at home using compresses, baths and over-the-counter (OTC) products including ointments (for internal and external hemorrhoids) and suppositories (for internal hemorrhoids), which are available at your pharmacy.

Hemorrhoid OTC Chart

Hydrocortisone (hydro-kort-i-zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps reduce itching and swelling • Treats internal and external hemorrhoids • Found in ointment, cream and suppository form * Over-use may weaken skin integrity, use products with hydrocortisone as directed
Witch hazel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps reduce itching and swelling • Treats internal and external hemorrhoids • Found in cream, suppository, pads and liquid form
Zinc sulfate monohydrate (mono-hi-drate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps reduce swelling and burning • Treats internal and external hemorrhoids • Found in ointment and suppository form
Pramoxine hydrochloride (pra-mox-een hydro-clor-ide)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps relieve itching and pain • Treats internal and external hemorrhoids • Found in ointment and suppository form
Phenylephrine (fen-il-ef-reen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps reduce itching, swelling, burning and discomfort • Treats internal and external hemorrhoids • Found in gel form

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Ask a pharmacist for more information. To speed up the healing process, these simple steps can help you ease and relieve the pain and swelling caused by hemorrhoids.

Home treatments include:

Sitz baths: A sitz bath is a warm, shallow bath that cleans the space between the rectum and the vulva/scrotum (perineum). A warm 20-minute sitz bath, after a bowel movement, can help relieve itching, irritation and spasms from the sphincter muscle. Be sure to gently pat dry (avoid rubbing) the anal area to avoid further irritation.

Cold compress: Applying an ice pack to the anal area on and off for 10-15 minutes, 5-times a day can help reduce the swelling.

Topical relief: Hemorrhoid creams containing hydrocortisone or witch hazel can provide soothing, temporary relief from pain and itching. Over-use of hydrocortisone can cause skin integrity to weaken, so it is important to use products only as directed.

Treatment interventions for hemorrhoid

In most instances, hemorrhoids can be treated quite effectively at home. However, when hemorrhoids do not respond to lifestyle changes and over-the-counter treatments, are large and continue to bleed, your physician may recommend one of the following procedures:

Rubber band ligation: A safe procedure where a small rubber band is placed around the bottom of an internal hemorrhoid. This will cut off circulation and cause the hemorrhoid to fall off within a week.

Sclerotherapy: A safe procedure where a solution is injected into the hemorrhoid, causing it to shrink.

Coagulation therapy: A safe procedure where infrared light is used to harden the hemorrhoid, cutting off circulation to the vein.

Hemorrhoidectomy: Is the surgical removal of hemorrhoids. This safe procedure is given under general anesthesia with one advantage being that multiple hemorrhoids can be treated at once. However, it has a disadvantage in removing most of the network of small veins that provide a natural cushion to the mucosa protecting the anal canal.

How can I prevent hemorrhoids?

To help protect you against developing hemorrhoids, try incorporating the following lifestyle changes:

Don't hold it: Use the washroom when you have the urge to go, avoid straining, prolonged sitting or reading on the toilet, and don't rush; all these will help avoid the build-up of pressure.

Inactivity: Avoid sitting or standing still for long periods of time, inappropriately lifting heavy items or holding your breath while lifting. This increases pressure on the anus causing local blood vessels to swell. If pregnant, sleeping on your side can reduce pressure on the blood vessels in your pelvis, preventing hemorrhoids from increasing.

Preparing for your appointment

Good communication with your doctor is an important part of any effective health management strategy. Before you visit your doctor, write down:

- Symptoms that you are experiencing
- How often you are experiencing symptoms
- Streaks of blood in the toilet, on toilet paper or on stool
- Location and severity of pain or discomfort, if any
- Changes to your bowel movements
- A list of medications you are taking and why you are taking them
- Questions you want answered during the appointment

Partnering for best health

Working collaboratively with your health care professional will help you protect your body from digestive problems and maximize your digestive health. When you report your health status completely, concisely and accurately, your physician can provide you with the best care and treatment plan. Be sure to stay informed on ways to maintain your health and well-being, track and record your symptoms, and write down questions and concerns to discuss at your next appointment.

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Learning more about hemorrhoids

The Canadian Digestive Health Foundation provides information, tools and support to help you take control your digestive health with confidence and optimism. Visit www.CDHF.ca to view helpful about other digestive disorders or browse the links below.

The CDHF has videos, on-line seminars, personal stories and other resources about topics related to hemorrhoids that you can access anytime you have an internet connection. Please visit: <http://www.CDHF.ca/hemorrhoids>

Constipation 101: A General Introduction

Dr. David Armstrong presents an informative and amusing overview of constipation to a capacity crowd at the 2012 CDHF Digestive Health Public Education Forum. Watch and listen as he explains the disease, its causes, tests you might have to diagnose the condition and available treatments. www.CDHF.ca/constipation101

CDHF Love Your Tummy

Love Your Tummy is a global educational campaign initiated by the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO). The Canadian Digestive Health Foundation has partnered with the WGO to help you protect and enhance your digestive health. Digestive health is essential. Poor digestive health can affect your energy, mood, concentration, ability to fight sickness, and more so it's important to Love Your Tummy.

In our Love Your Tummy section, you'll find useful information that will allow you to better understand your digestive system, learn how to prevent digestive discomforts and proactively protect your digestive health.

<http://www.CDHF.ca/en/tummy>

Please note: The information contained in this digestive disorder guide is not a substitute for medical care and the advice of your physician. There may be variations in treatment that your physician may recommend based on your individual facts and circumstances. Always consult with your physician when you have concerns about your health.

CDHF App helps track information

The CDHF has developed a smart phone app for iPhone and Android called

Gi BodyGuard to help you quickly, easily and privately track and share your digestive symptoms with your physician.

Gi BodyGuard has a built-in symptom tracker (stool, pain, blood), food, fitness and medication trackers, a health history form and appointment/medication reminders. Using **Gi BodyGuard** is quick, easy and private.

As well, **Gi BodyGuard** lets you produce comprehensive reports so you can share important information with your physician during your next appointment. You can download **Gi BodyGuard** for free at:

www.CDHF.ca/Gibodyguard



CDHF Fibre-osity

Despite the many health benefits associated with high-fibre diets, almost all Canadians don't consume nearly enough, less than half of the recommended daily amount. The CDHF wants to ensure your digestive system is healthy, productive and supporting you in your busy life. One way is to consume the proper types of fibre in adequate amounts. The Canadian Digestive Health Foundation (CDHF) can help you do this.

Fibre-osity has been created for you to ensure that you understand and enjoy all the benefits of fibre so you can enjoy your digestive- and overall- health. Learn more at:

<http://www.CDHF.ca/Fibreosity>

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Please accept my donation to support:

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My donation is:

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_____ (person's name)

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Donate by Cheque:

- I have enclosed a cheque for \$ _____
- I have enclosed a blank cheque marked "VOID" and authorize the Canadian Digestive Health Foundation to deduct \$ _____ from my account on the 28th day of each month

Signature: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____ (dd/mm/yy)

Donate by Credit Card:

I would like to make a donation using my credit card. Please charge my

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- \$ 100 \$ 250 \$ 500 \$ 1000 Other \$ _____.

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Signature: _____

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City: _____ Prov: ____ PC: _____

- Please send me information about protecting and improving my digestive health.

Over 20 million Canadians suffer from digestive disorders every year. The Canadian Digestive Health Foundation believes this is unnecessary and unacceptable.

We reduce suffering and improve quality of life by empowering Canadians with trusted, up to date, science-based information about digestive health and disease.

As the Foundation of the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology, we work directly with leading physicians, scientists, and other health care professionals to help you understand and take control of your digestive health with confidence and optimism.

Through research and public education, we aim to:

 **REDUCE**
the incidence and prevalence of digestive disorders

 **IMPROVE**
understanding of digestive health issues

 **SUPPORT**
those suffering from digestive disorders

 **ENHANCE**
quality of life for those living with digestive disorders

Request for support

The Canadian Digestive Health Foundation is a national charity governed by a volunteer board of directors. We rely on donations from the public and the generosity of our partners to develop and deliver our programs. Please consider including our Foundation as one of your chosen charities.

Contact us/Donate to

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or donate on line at www.CDHF.ca.