

EAST MISSISSIPPI ENDOSCOPIC CENTER

HEMORRHOIDS

WHAT ARE HEMORRHOIDS?

Hemorrhoids are veins in the anal canal that can become swollen or stretched. Just like varicose veins in the legs, hemorrhoids rarely cause problems.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF HEMORRHOIDS?

There are two types of hemorrhoids: *internal* and *external*

Internal hemorrhoids are swollen veins that arise from inside the rectum. When internal hemorrhoids become large, they may prolapse, or protrude out through the anal canal. The most common sign of hemorrhoids is bright red blood on the toilet paper or drops of blood in the toilet bowl. A thrombosed hemorrhoid contains a blood clot and may cause painful burning, pressure, or even an intense urge to scratch the area.

External hemorrhoids are swollen veins that can be seen and often felt under the skin outside the anal canal. Usually they look like a small bulge and are the same color as the skin.

HOW DO HEMORRHOIDS DEVELOP?

Hemorrhoids are very common. About half the American population have hemorrhoids by the age of 50. Hemorrhoids develop due to increased pressure often caused by straining to have a bowel movement. Hemorrhoids frequently develop in women during pregnancy when the developing fetus causes increased pressure on the rectal area. Chronic constipation, diarrhea, hereditary factors, and aging may also lead to hemorrhoids.

HOW ARE HEMORRHOIDS DIAGNOSED?

As with all conditions involving the anal canal or rectum, the diagnosis is made by examining the anus visually and performing a digital rectal examination (using a gloved finger). Following this, a lighted instrument is inserted into the rectal canal so that the interior of the canal can be visualized. This lighted tube may be an *anoscope* (a short tube which can examine the last few inches of the rectum) or a *sigmoidoscope* (a longer flexible tube that can also examine the lower part of the large intestine).

HOW ARE HEMORRHOIDS MEDICALLY TREATED?

Eliminate constipation and or diarrhea. Bowel movements should be soft and should pass without the need to strain. Constipation is usually caused by insufficient bulk in the bowel movement. Increasing water intake, increasing dietary fiber, and exercise are effective remedies.

Creams and suppositories: Preparation H or Anusol