

External Hemorrhoids

A Practical Guide For Patients



GastroDoxs
— defenders of the digestive system —

**A Patient Guide to Understanding
External Hemorrhoids**

WWW.GASTRODOXS.COM

Table of contents

1. Introduction
2. What Causes External Hemorrhoids?
3. Symptoms
4. Diagnosis
5. Diet
6. Medications
7. Therapies
8. Coping
9. FAQs
10. Take Action



GastroDoxs
— defenders of the digestive system —

Introduction: External Hemorrhoids

External hemorrhoids are swollen veins located around the anus, forming part of the venous cushions that help with stool control. They occur when these veins become inflamed or distended due to increased pressure, often from straining during bowel movements, constipation, pregnancy, prolonged sitting, or heavy lifting. Unlike internal hemorrhoids, external ones are covered by sensitive skin, making them prone to pain, itching, and discomfort. Symptoms may include swelling, tenderness, bleeding, and the presence of a hard lump near the anus. While often manageable with lifestyle changes and topical treatments, severe cases may require medical or surgical intervention to relieve pain and prevent complications.

Key Takeaways

- **Definition:** Swollen, inflamed veins around the anus.
- **Causes:** Straining, constipation, pregnancy, obesity, prolonged sitting, or heavy lifting.
- **Symptoms:** Pain, itching, swelling, bleeding, and lumps near the anus.
- **Diagnosis:** Based on physical examination and patient history.
- **Treatment:** Lifestyle changes, topical creams, sitz baths, or in severe cases, surgery.
- **Complications:** Thrombosis (clotted hemorrhoid), persistent pain, or recurrent bleeding.
- **Prevention:** High-fiber diet, hydration, avoiding straining, and regular exercise.



What Causes External Hemorrhoids?

Known Causes:

External hemorrhoids develop when veins around the anus become swollen and distended due to increased pressure. **Chronic constipation** and frequent straining during bowel movements are the most common causes. **Prolonged sitting on the toilet** can also increase pressure on anal veins. Pregnancy, due to hormonal changes and increased pelvic pressure, is another common trigger. Additional risk factors include **obesity, heavy lifting, chronic diarrhea, and low-fiber diets** that make stools harder to pass. Aging weakens supporting tissues, making hemorrhoids more likely. These combined factors impair blood flow and cause the veins to enlarge, leading to pain, swelling, and discomfort characteristic of external hemorrhoids.

- **Chronic constipation** straining during hard bowel movements.
- **Chronic diarrhea** frequent irritation of anal veins.
- **Prolonged sitting on the toilet** increases rectal pressure.
- **Pregnancy** hormonal changes and pelvic pressure.
- **Obesity** excess weight adds pressure on pelvic veins.
- **Heavy lifting** straining raises abdominal and rectal pressure.
- **Low-fiber diet** leads to hard stools and straining.
- **Aging** weakens supporting tissues around veins.
- **Prolonged sitting or standing** reduces blood flow, causing venous congestion.



Common Signs & Symptoms

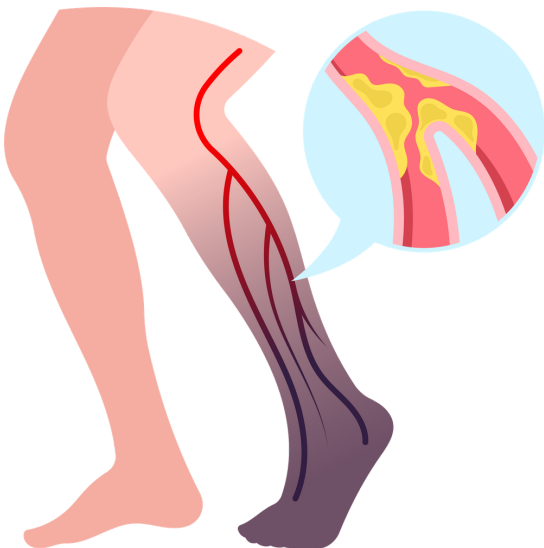
Common signs and symptoms of external hemorrhoids include **pain, itching, and irritation around the anus, swelling or lumps near the anal opening, bleeding during bowel movements, and discomfort while sitting.** Severe cases may involve thrombosis, causing intense pain and hardness.

Core Symptoms Include:

- **Pain or discomfort** around the anus, especially while sitting or during bowel movements.
- **Itching and irritation** in the anal area.
- **Swelling** or a tender lump near the anus.
- **Bleeding** during or after bowel movements.
- **Hard, painful lump** if a blood clot



Severe cases can also cause:



- **Thrombosis** formation of a painful blood clot inside the hemorrhoid.
- Severe **swelling and inflammation** around the anus.
- **Persistent or heavy bleeding** leading to anemia in rare cases.
- **Ulceration or infection** of the hemorrhoid tissue.



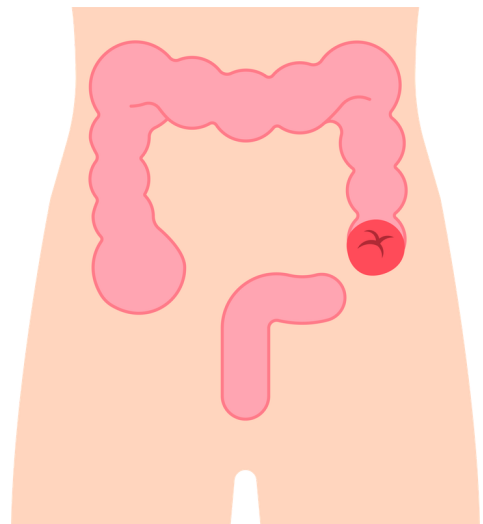
GastroDoxs
— defenders of the digestive system —

Diagnosis & Medical Testing

Diagnosis of external hemorrhoids is usually made through **physical examination of the anal area**. In some cases, a **digital rectal exam or anoscopy** may be performed to rule out internal hemorrhoids, fissures, or other anorectal conditions.

Diagnostic Tools:

- Physical Examination inspection of the anal region for swelling, lumps, or irritation.
- Digital Rectal Exam (DRE) checking for tenderness, masses, or internal involvement.
- Anoscopy direct visualization of the anal canal using a lighted tube.
- Proctoscopy examination of the rectum to rule out internal hemorrhoids or other causes of bleeding.
- Sigmoidoscopy used if symptoms suggest deeper colorectal issues.
- Colonoscopy recommended for persistent bleeding or to exclude polyps, cancer, or inflammatory bowel disease.



GastroDoxs
— defenders of the digestive system —

A diet for external hemorrhoids should be **rich in fiber** from fruits, vegetables, and whole grains to soften stools and prevent straining.

Adequate hydration, avoiding processed foods, spicy dishes, and excessive caffeine or alcohol helps reduce irritation and flare-ups.

Key Insights:

- **Increase fiber intake** with fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains.
- **Drink plenty of water** (8–10 glasses daily) to soften stools.
- Avoid **low-fiber foods** like processed snacks, fast food, and refined grains.
- Limit caffeine (**coffee, tea, energy drinks**) that may dehydrate.
- Reduce **alcohol** intake as it can cause dehydration and constipation.
- Include probiotics (**yogurt, kefir**) to support gut health.
- Eat smaller, balanced meals instead of **heavy, infrequent meals**.
- Avoid **spicy foods** that may worsen anal irritation.
- Incorporate healthy fats (**olive oil, flaxseed, nuts**) to ease stool passage.
- Add **fiber supplements** if dietary intake is insufficient.
- Avoid **excessive dairy** which can contribute to constipation.
- Choose **lean proteins** like fish, chicken, or plant-based options.
- Limit **red meat** which is harder to digest.
- Consume dried fruits (**prunes, figs**) as natural stool softeners.
- Maintain consistency in **dietary habits** to prevent flare-ups.

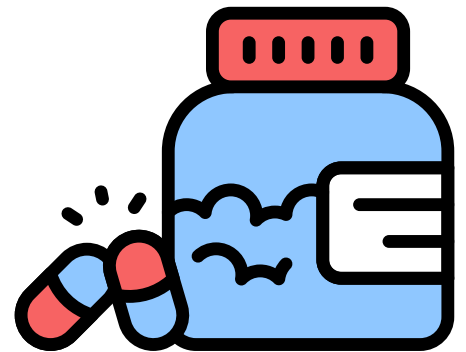


Medications & Treatment Options

Treatment of external hemorrhoids includes **topical creams, ointments, or suppositories** for pain, itching, and swelling. **Oral pain relievers** and stool softeners may also help. Severe cases may require **minimally invasive procedures or surgery** if conservative measures fail to relieve symptoms.

Treatment Options

- **Topical creams and ointments** to reduce pain, itching, and swelling.
- **Oral pain relievers** such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen for discomfort.
- **Stool softeners or fiber supplements** to prevent straining.
- **Sitz baths** warm water baths to soothe irritation and improve circulation.
- **Cold compresses** to reduce swelling and discomfort.
- **Good hygiene practices** gentle cleaning of the anal area.
- **Rubber band ligation** cutting off blood supply to hemorrhoids.
- **Sclerotherapy** injection to shrink hemorrhoids.
- **Infrared coagulation** using heat to shrink tissue.



GastroDoxs
— defenders of the digestive system —

Advanced Therapies & Procedures

Advanced therapies for external hemorrhoids include **rubber band ligation**, **sclerotherapy**, and **infrared coagulation** for persistent cases. Severe or thrombosed hemorrhoids may require **surgical options** like hemorrhoidectomy or stapled hemorrhoidopexy, providing long-term relief when conservative treatments and medications fail.

Therapy Options:

- Topical ointments/creams reduce pain, itching, and swelling.
- Oral pain relievers for temporary relief of discomfort.
- Stool softeners & fiber supplements prevent constipation and straining.
- Sitz baths warm water soaks to relieve irritation.
- Cold compresses/ice packs reduce swelling and pain.
- Improved hygiene gentle cleaning and avoiding harsh wipes.
- Lifestyle modifications high-fiber diet, hydration, exercise.
- Rubber band ligation cuts blood supply to hemorrhoids.
- Sclerotherapy chemical injection to shrink hemorrhoids.
- Infrared coagulation heat treatment to shrink tissue.
- Hemorrhoidectomy surgical removal of severe hemorrhoids.
- Stapled hemorrhoidopexy repositions and reduces blood flow to hemorrhoids.

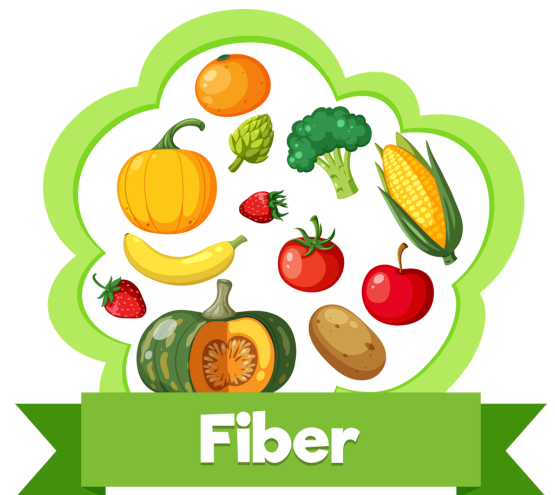


Coping With External Hemorrhoids

Coping with external hemorrhoids involves **using sitz baths, topical treatments, cold compresses, and pain relievers** to ease discomfort. Maintaining a high-fiber diet, proper hydration, and good hygiene helps prevent flare-ups, while avoiding prolonged sitting or straining reduces irritation.

Practical Strategies

- Eat a high-fiber diet to keep stools soft and reduce straining.
- Drink plenty of water to prevent constipation.
- Use sitz baths to relieve pain and swelling.
- Apply cold compresses for short-term relief of inflammation.
- Practice good hygiene by gently cleaning the anal area.
- Avoid prolonged sitting on the toilet or at work; take breaks to move.
- Exercise regularly to improve circulation and bowel function.
- Use stool softeners or fiber supplements if needed.
- Avoid heavy lifting and straining to reduce pressure on veins.





Q1: What are external hemorrhoids?

A: They are swollen veins around the anus that cause pain, itching, swelling, or bleeding.

Q2: What causes them?

A: Common causes include constipation, straining, pregnancy, obesity, prolonged sitting, and low-fiber diets.

Q3: How are they treated?

A: Mild cases improve with sitz baths, creams, and lifestyle changes; severe cases may need procedures or surgery.

Q4: Can they go away on their own?

A: Small hemorrhoids may shrink with self-care, but persistent or painful ones often require medical treatment.

Q5: How can they be prevented?

A: Eating a high-fiber diet, drinking enough water, exercising, and avoiding straining during bowel movements helps prevent flare-ups.



Take Action

If you experience **External Hemorrhoids**, don't ignore them. Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent complications. Schedule a consultation with **GastroDoxs** for expert guidance on managing your digestive health.

For additional resources, visit GastroDoxs.com.

**Your health starts with knowledge.
Take the first step today!**

SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT



GastroDoxs
— defenders of the digestive system —