



The Hemorrhoid

Hemorrhoidectomy: What to Expect at Home

Your Recovery

After surgery to remove bothersome hemorrhoids, expect to feel sore and more aware of your anus than perhaps you ever have been. Bowel movements will be uncomfortable but will slowly and steadily feel better and more normal. You will likely have fluid and/or blood weep from the anus after surgery and may notice some blood with bowel movements. It is typically only a small amount – some drops in the toilet and spotting on toilet paper. There is often a small amount of fluid/blood on the underwear for the first week, so a pad or gauze tucked against the anus is helpful. These symptoms will gradually resolve but may last for up to a month after surgery.

This recovery period will likely take longer than you might expect, and longer than you would like. Your anal area will be sore and will ache for a few weeks after surgery, typically 2 to 4 weeks. We use a long-acting numbing medicine which may last 3 or 4 days, but even so some pain medicine is usually helpful while you recover. Pain relief tips are listed below.

After 1 to 2 weeks, you should be able to do some of your normal activities. But don't do things that require a lot of effort/straining. It is important to avoid heavy lifting, and straining with bowel movements while you recover. Drink a lot of water. Don't stay sitting or lying down most of the day. Take a stool softener and a mild laxative (such as Senna) if needed, to have easier and daily bowel movements. These are safe and well-tolerated by most people and can be used for weeks without consequence, if needed.

This care sheet gives you a general idea about how long it will take for you to recover. But each person recovers at a different pace. Follow the steps below to get better as quickly as possible.

How can you care for yourself at home?

Activity

1. Rest when you feel tired or sore.
2. Be active. You must mobilize/walk several times a day.



3. Allow your body to heal. Don't try to exercise or do strenuous work too soon.
4. You may shower and bathe as usual. Bathing can be helpful to clean and calm the anus after surgery. These are often referred to as Sitz baths and don't need salts, Epsom or otherwise.
5. Depending on your work duties, you may need to take 1 to 2 weeks off to avoid feeling miserable because of the activities. Speak with your surgeon about this.

Diet

Follow your doctor's instructions about eating after surgery:

1. Start eating high-fiber foods 2 or 3 days after your surgery and make a lifelong habit of this. This will make bowel movements easier, and it lowers the chance that you will get hemorrhoids again.
2. Be sure to drink a lot of water, at least 60 ounces (about 1.77 L) daily, and take a stool softener and a mild laxative (such as Senna) daily to keep your stools soft and easy to pass. Don't spend a lot of time on the toilet. Move your bowels and finish.

Medications

1. Your doctor will tell you if and when you can restart your medicines. They will also give you instructions about taking any new medicines if they are needed.
2. If you take blood thinners, examples are warfarin (Coumadin), clopidogrel (Plavix), or aspirin, be sure to read your instructions given to you before and after surgery, and if you have questions, please talk to your doctor. They will tell you how and when to start taking those medicines again. Make sure that you understand clearly what your doctor wants you to do.
3. Take pain medicines exactly as directed. If the doctor gave you a prescription medicine for pain, take it as prescribed, but not more or more often than prescribed. If you don't feel you need pain relief, then it is your choice not to take any. These are recommendations that have worked well, in our experience.
 - a. Ibuprofen and Tylenol are wonderful pain medications but must be used with a plan to receive help from them. If no one has recommended that you avoid taking these medications, you should start your efforts at pain relief with these prior to starting any narcotic pain medications (hydrocodone/Norco/Vicodin, oxycodone/Percocet, and more).
 - b. A good regimen is to alternate Tylenol and ibuprofen every 3-4 hours (500 to 650 mg of Tylenol, then 600 mg of ibuprofen three hours later, then repeat the Tylenol dose three hours after that, and the ibuprofen three hours after that, and so on). If you cannot take one or both of these medications, please let your doctor know so we can help.



- c. Do not take two or more pain medicines at the same time unless the doctor tells you to. Many pain medicines contain acetaminophen, which is Tylenol. Too much Tylenol can be harmful to your liver.
- d. If you think your pain medicine is making you sick to your stomach:
 - i. Take your medicine after meals.
 - ii. Ask your doctor for a different pain medicine or an anti-nausea medication.
4. If your doctor prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.

Other instructions and advice

1. Sit in a few inches of warm water (sitz bath) for 15 to 20 minutes 3 times a day and after bowel movements if these are painful. Then pat the area dry. Do this if you have pain in your anal area as another choice for easing the discomfort. This will also help to keep your anal area clean.
2. Avoid sitting on the toilet for lengthy periods of time or straining during bowel movements.
3. Support your feet with a small step stool when you sit on the toilet. This helps flex your hips and places your pelvis in a squatting position. This can make bowel movements easier after surgery.
4. Use baby wipes or medicated pads, such as Tucks, instead of toilet paper after a bowel movement. These products do not irritate the anus. They can clog plumbing, though. So, dispose of them in the garbage.
5. Apply cold packs to the anus several times a day for 10 minutes at a time for pain relief to help reduce swelling.
6. Try lying on your stomach with a pillow under your hips to decrease pain and swelling.