

Haemorrhoidectomy

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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What are haemorrhoids?

Haemorrhoids, also known as piles, are soft fleshy lumps just inside your back passage (anus). They have a rich blood supply and bleed easily, usually causing fresh bright-red bleeding when you have had a bowel movement. They do not usually cause pain but can cause itching around your anus. When large, they can pass through your anus (prolapsed pile), feeling like a lump when you clean yourself.

They are associated with constipation, particularly if you need to strain to open your bowels, and can be made worse by pregnancy.

What are the benefits of surgery?

Surgery will remove the haemorrhoids. You should no longer have any of the symptoms that haemorrhoids can cause.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Drinking plenty of fluid and increasing the amount of fibre in your diet usually improves the way your bowels work.

If these simple measures are unsuccessful, the haemorrhoids can usually be treated in a clinic. Local treatments aimed at shrinking the haemorrhoids include 'banding' or 'injecting' the haemorrhoids.

What will happen if I decide not to have the operation or the operation is delayed?

You will continue to bleed at times. You can decide to continue with simple measures or local treatments.

As long as the bleeding is caused only by your haemorrhoids and you are not anaemic (your body does not produce enough healthy red blood cells), it should be safe to continue as you are.

However, it is important that you are examined by a specialist to check if the bleeding is coming from your haemorrhoids and nowhere else.

What does the operation involve?

The operation is usually performed under a general anaesthetic but various anaesthetic techniques are possible.

The operation usually takes about 20 minutes. Your surgeon will examine your back passage and lower bowel before removing the haemorrhoids.

How can I prepare myself for the operation?

If you smoke, stopping smoking now may reduce your risk of developing complications and will improve your long-term health.

Try to maintain a healthy weight. You have a higher risk of developing complications if you are overweight.

Regular exercise should help to prepare you for the operation, help you to recover and improve your long-term health. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Speak to the healthcare team about any vaccinations you might need to reduce your risk of serious illness while you recover. When you come into hospital, practise social distancing and hand washing and wear a face covering when asked.

What complications can happen?

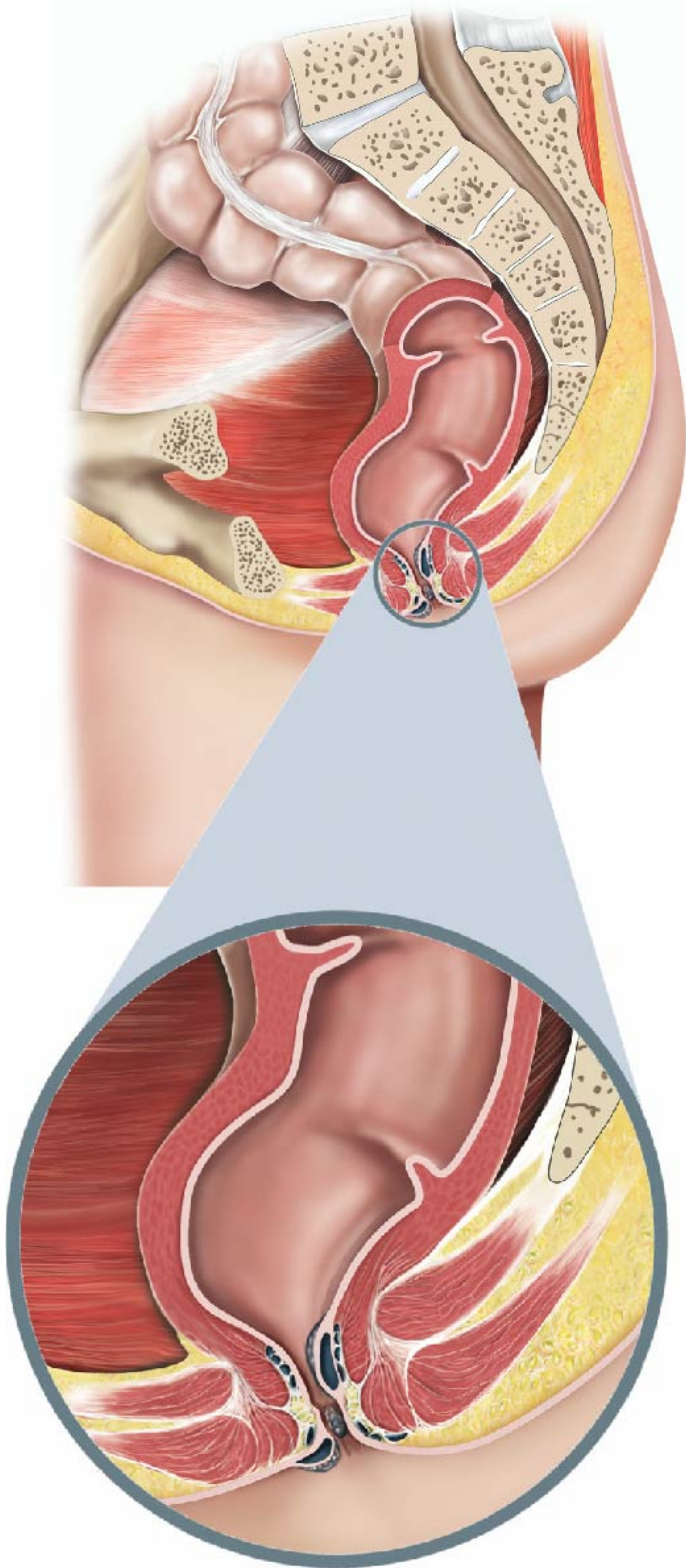
Some complications can be serious and can even cause death.

General complications of any operation

- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Blood clot in your leg
- Blood clot in your lung
- Chest infection

Specific complications of this operation

- Incomplete haemorrhoidectomy



Haemorrhoids in the anal canal

- Difficulty passing urine
- Making a hole through the wall of your bowel
- Anal stenosis
- Developing skin tags
- Developing an anal fissure
- Incontinence can happen to a minor degree

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day, especially if your haemorrhoids were treated using a staple gun.

Drink plenty of fluid and increase the amount of fibre in your diet to avoid constipation.

The wounds often take several weeks to heal completely and you may need to wear pads until then. There are no open wounds with the stapled technique.

You should be able to return to work within 3 to 4 weeks, depending on your type of work.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

You should make a full recovery and the symptoms should clear completely. However, haemorrhoids can come back.

Summary

Haemorrhoids are a common problem. If non-surgical treatments fail, surgery is usually recommended.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

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Acknowledgements

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