

If you would like this information  
in another format or language,  
please contact the PALS Office

Telephone: 01536 493305  
or email [PALS@kgh.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@kgh.nhs.uk)

## Haemorrhoidectomy

**Your questions  
answered**

Author: Mr M D Rashed, consultant surgeon  
Date: January 2006  
Review: Sept 2008  
Approved by PIC: Sept 2006

Information for patients

**Q) What are haemorrhoids?**

- A)** Haemorrhoids (piles) are a very common condition and nearly 30% of the population experience them at some stage in their lives. They are swollen blood vessels in the anal canal (the back passage). This creates swellings similar to the varicose veins that some people have on their legs.

Constipation is the most common cause of this condition and this is because straining to open the bowels causes congestion and eventually enlargement of the veins in the anal canal. Haemorrhoids seem to occur more frequently in some families and are more common during or after pregnancy. Haemorrhoids may cause bleeding and discomfort and sometimes may protrude outside the anal canal.

Following your examination and assessment of the haemorrhoids, it was felt that a haemorrhoidectomy would be the best treatment.

**Q) How will an operation help me?**

- A)** Your surgeon has advised that your haemorrhoids are severe enough or troublesome enough to need an operation. This operation involves cutting away the swellings, which should alleviate the problems that you have been having.

**Q) What preparation is needed before the operation?**

- A)** You may come into hospital the day before the operation or on the morning of the operation. Usually no specific preparation is needed. You will be asked some questions about your general state of health by the nurses and doctors on the ward and this is a good time to discuss any further questions you have about the operation.

**Q) What are the alternatives ?**

- A)** Any alternative treatment will have been discussed with you when you met with the consultant at your initial appointment.

**Q) What are the risks?**

- A)** There is a risk of post - operative bleeding or infection. If the wounds become red, hot to the touch, painful, swollen, or you feel unwell, you must seek medical advice.

**Q) What are the benefits?**

- A)** People who have experienced bleeding when going to the toilet may find that this is reduced or cured completely. Surgery is the most effective cure for prolapsed haemorrhoids.

**The following are some suggestions and advice**

- You should increase the amount of fibre in your diet gradually. A sudden increase can cause some abdominal discomfort and wind
- If fibre in your food is not enough to keep your stools soft then consider taking a fibre supplement such as Fybogel
- In the case of women, if you become pregnant, you will need to take special care not to become constipated
- It is also important to ensure that you drink plenty of fluids, try to take at least 5-8 cups of fluid per day
- The fluid you take can be any type including water, tea, coffee, fruit juice, squash or soup

**Q) Are there any long-term effects of the operation?**

- A)** In a very few cases, if someone has weak muscles around the back passage, (anal sphincter) and a tendency to find it difficult to control the bowels, or leakage, this may worsen after the operation. If you find that you are having difficulty you should talk to your doctor. Sometimes exercise to strengthen the sphincter will help.

**Q) Can I prevent the haemorrhoids coming back?**

- A)** Unfortunately having this operation does not guarantee that your haemorrhoids will never come back. You now know that you have a tendency to develop haemorrhoids, so it makes sense to try and avoid this happening in the future.

The best way of doing this is to avoid straining to open your bowels. If you have a tendency to constipation try to increase the amount of fibre in your diet. Fibres form the structures of cereals, fruit and vegetables. It is not completely digested or absorbed by the body so it provides bulk to the stools.

This will help the movement of waste through the intestine resulting in soft stools which are easily passed.

**Q) What will happen after the operation?**

- A)**
- You will usually have a dressing in place around the entrance to the anus. This is to control any bleeding in the area. This will feel strange and possibly uncomfortable. It may make you feel that you want to open your bowels (although you are not likely to do so)
  - Some discomfort is to be expected. Pain killers or a local anaesthetic gel are available. Please ask your nurses if you need something to help with the discomfort
  - You will normally have a bath the next day and this will soak the dressing out. It is quite possible that you may bleed a little in the bath. Do not be alarmed, this can make the water look very red. Ask your nurse for assistance if you are concerned
  - Frequent baths can be soothing to the area
  - You may have some stitches that are outside the anus on your skin. All stitches used are dissolvable and do not need to be removed
  - When you are awake you will be able to eat and drink as you wish and to get up as soon as you feel able
  - It is necessary to stay on the ward until the effect of the anaesthetic has completely worn off

**Q) How will I open my bowels?**

**A)** From the day after your operation you will be given laxatives to soften your stools and stimulate bowel action. You may not feel the need to open your bowels for a day or two. When you do you may experience some discomfort and a little bleeding. This is to be expected. We will aim to control any discomfort by giving you pain killers as you require them (it is often a good idea to take pain killers 15 - 20 minutes before you try to open your bowels).

**Q) How long will I be in hospital?**

**A)** If your operation is done as a day case you can go home provided that you are accompanied by a responsible adult, (aged 18 yrs or over) who can take you home and stay with you for 24 hours. Usually we ask you to stay in hospital until you are reasonably comfortable when having your bowels open. This is usually 2-3 days after the operation but this can vary a lot between individuals.

**Q) What should I do if I bleed after I go home?**

**A)** You are quite likely to have a small amount of bleeding from the anus for about one week after the operation. You may notice this particularly on your stool when you open your bowels. This is normal and nothing to worry about. It is a good idea to wear a small pad inside your pants to protect your clothes from any staining. There is a very small chance of a more major bleed 10-14 days after the operation. If this happens you should seek urgent medical attention

**Q) How long should I stay off work?**

**A)**

- The time taken to get back to normal activities varies a lot for different people. Do as much as you feel comfortable doing
- If you need to take pain killers this may make you drowsy so you should avoid driving or operating machinery
- If lifting is causing you discomfort you should avoid it
- Most people need a few days off work but this will depend on what you do and it is important for you to pay attention to your body and only do as much as you feel able to
- You should try to avoid excessive walking or sitting until your wound has healed
- It would be unwise to go swimming until the area has completely healed
- You may resume sexual relations as soon as you feel comfortable