

## Surgical Treatment and Office Procedures for Hemorrhoids: What to Expect

Hemorrhoids, or swollen veins in the lower rectum and anus, are a common condition that can cause discomfort, itching, pain, and bleeding. Hemorrhoids may develop internally (inside the rectum) or externally (around the anus). While lifestyle changes and medications can often help manage symptoms, some cases may require medical procedures for lasting relief. Below, we'll explore surgical and office-based hemorrhoid treatments, including what to expect during and after the procedures.

### Understanding Hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoids develop when the veins in the rectum or anus become swollen and irritated, often due to factors such as constipation, prolonged sitting, pregnancy, or straining during bowel movements. While mild cases may resolve on their own or respond to home remedies, larger or persistent hemorrhoids may require intervention.

There are several medical treatments for hemorrhoids, ranging from minimally invasive office procedures to more involved surgical options.

### Office-Based Procedures for Hemorrhoids

For mild to moderate hemorrhoids, minimally invasive procedures can often be performed in the doctor's office. These procedures are usually quick, effective, and involve minimal discomfort. Common office procedures include:

#### 1. Rubber Band Ligation

- **How It Works:** This procedure is commonly used for internal hemorrhoids. The doctor places a small rubber band around the base of the hemorrhoid, cutting off its blood supply. The hemorrhoid shrinks and eventually falls off within a week.
- **Procedure Time:** The process takes only a few minutes and typically doesn't require anesthesia.
- **Recovery:** You may feel mild discomfort or pressure, but most people can return to normal activities immediately.
- **Effectiveness:** Rubber band ligation is effective for most internal hemorrhoids and may require a few sessions for optimal results.

#### 2. Sclerotherapy

- **How It Works:** A chemical solution is injected into the hemorrhoid, shrinking it and eventually dissolving it. This procedure is typically used for smaller internal hemorrhoids.
- **Procedure Time:** Sclerotherapy takes only a few minutes and is generally painless.

- **Recovery:** Minimal to no downtime is needed, with most patients able to resume daily activities immediately.
- **Effectiveness:** Sclerotherapy is adequate for smaller hemorrhoids and may require repeat treatments for larger ones.

### 3. Infrared Coagulation (IRC)

- **How It Works:** This procedure uses infrared light to coagulate the blood vessels within the hemorrhoid, shrinking it. It is typically performed on small-to-moderate internal hemorrhoids.
- **Procedure Time:** The procedure is quick and usually requires no anesthesia.
- **Recovery:** Patients can resume regular activities after treatment, though some may experience mild discomfort.
- **Effectiveness:** IRC is adequate for more minor hemorrhoids and may require multiple treatments.

## Surgical Treatments for Hemorrhoids

For more significant, persistent, or more symptomatic hemorrhoids, surgical options may be recommended. These treatments are typically more invasive and may require anesthesia and a longer recovery period. Common surgical treatments include:

### 1. Hemorrhoidectomy

- **How It Works:** This procedure involves the surgical removal of external or severe internal hemorrhoids. The doctor excises the hemorrhoidal tissue, and the area is either sutured closed or left open to heal naturally.
- **Procedure Time:** A hemorrhoidectomy usually takes about 30-60 minutes and is performed under local or general anesthesia.
- **Recovery:** Patients may need a few weeks to recover fully; pain is expected during the initial healing period. Pain management and stool softeners are often prescribed to aid recovery.
- **Effectiveness:** Hemorrhoidectomy is highly effective and typically considered a permanent solution for severe hemorrhoids.

### 2. Stapled Hemorrhoidopexy

- **How It Works:** Stapled hemorrhoidopexy (also known as PPH or Procedure for Prolapse and Hemorrhoids) is a procedure that repositions prolapsed hemorrhoidal tissue and reduces blood flow to the hemorrhoids, causing them to shrink. It is often used for internal hemorrhoids.
- **Procedure Time:** The procedure is performed under anesthesia and takes about 30-45 minutes.

- **Recovery:** Recovery time is usually faster than with a hemorrhoidectomy, and pain is generally less intense, though some discomfort is expected.
- **Effectiveness:** Stapled hemorrhoidopexy is effective for prolapsed internal hemorrhoids but may not be suitable for all types of hemorrhoids.

## Recovery After Hemorrhoid Treatments

Recovery time and experience vary based on the procedure used. Here are general guidelines for recovery after hemorrhoid treatments:

1. **Pain Management:** Mild to moderate pain is common after hemorrhoid procedures, especially surgical ones. Your doctor may prescribe pain relievers or recommend over-the-counter options. Sitting baths, where you soak the affected area in warm water, can also provide relief.
2. **Diet and Hydration:** A high-fiber diet and plenty of fluids help prevent constipation and straining, which can worsen hemorrhoid symptoms and slow healing.
3. **Activity Level:** Most people can return to normal activities after minimally invasive treatments. However, depending on the procedure, you may need to rest for a few days or weeks after surgery.
4. **Wound Care and Hygiene:** To reduce the risk of infection, keep the area clean and dry and follow your doctor's instructions for wound care.
5. **Follow-Up Visits:** Schedule follow-up visits with your doctor to ensure proper healing and address any concerns.

## Potential Risks and Complications

While hemorrhoid procedures are generally safe, there are some risks to be aware of:

- **Bleeding:** Minor bleeding is common after most procedures, but significant or prolonged bleeding should be reported to your doctor.
- **Infection:** Follow proper hygiene and wound care to reduce the risk of infection, especially after surgical treatments.
- **Recurrence:** While many procedures effectively remove or shrink hemorrhoids, recurrence is possible. Lifestyle changes, including a high-fiber diet, regular exercise, and good bathroom habits, can reduce the risk of recurrence.
- **Pain and Discomfort:** Pain is more likely after surgical procedures but generally improves over time.

## When to Contact Your Doctor

Contact your doctor if you experience any of the following after a hemorrhoid treatment:

- Persistent or severe pain

- Fever over 100.4°F (38°C)
- Significant or prolonged bleeding
- Signs of infection, such as increased redness, swelling, or discharge
- Any other unusual symptoms or concerns

## **Conclusion**

Hemorrhoids can be effectively treated with a variety of minimally invasive office procedures and surgical treatments, depending on the severity and symptoms. Knowing what to expect before, during, and after these treatments can help you feel more prepared and at ease. Following your doctor's instructions and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can reduce your risk of hemorrhoid recurrence and improve your overall comfort and quality of life.