



## DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

# Managing Hemorrhoids

A hemorrhoid is a swollen, inflamed vein in the rectum or anus that may require medical treatment. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

## Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

<b>Internal vs. External Hemorrhoids</b>	Internal hemorrhoids are inside the anal canal, while external hemorrhoids are outside the canal, on the surface of the anus.
<b>Pruritis Ani</b>	Pruritis is the medical term for itching, while ani means anus. This is a common symptom of hemorrhoids.
<b>Prolapsed Hemorrhoid</b>	An internal hemorrhoid can sometimes slip out of the anal canal. When this happens, it's called a prolapsed hemorrhoid.
<b>Thrombosed Hemorrhoid</b>	A hemorrhoid can become thrombosed when a blood clot in the vein leaves it without blood flow. This can be extremely painful but isn't generally dangerous. It typically only happens with external hemorrhoids.
<b>Strangulated Hemorrhoid</b>	A rare complication in which a internal hemorrhoid becomes strangulated when blood flow to it is cut off. This causes extreme pain and medical attention is important for preventing the infection that can result from it.
<b>Hemorrhoid Cushion</b>	A structure inside your anal canal that's made up of muscle, connective tissues, and blood vessels. Any kind of straining (such as pushing on the toilet or giving birth) increases blood pressure in the hemorrhoid cushion and can cause a vessel to slip out of place, leading to a hemorrhoid.
<b>Ascites</b>	An accumulation of fluid in the abdominal cavity, which is common in advanced liver disease. Ascites are a common cause of hemorrhoids.
<b>Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome</b>	An inherited disorder that involves impairment of the tissues that make up the pelvic floor, which can lead to hemorrhoids.
<b>Anoscope</b>	A device doctors use to look inside the rectum. It's a short, narrow tube that has a light on it. It's often used to help diagnose hemorrhoids or other causes of hemorrhoid-like symptoms.



### Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage your hemorrhoids.

#### About Symptoms

- Why is/isn't my hemorrhoid painful?
- What symptoms may develop that are cause for concern?
- How severe should I expect symptoms to get?

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#### About Causes & Risk Factors

- Why did I get a hemorrhoid?
- What can I do to prevent future hemorrhoids?
- What lifestyle choices can increase my risk of hemorrhoids?

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#### About Diagnosis

- What tests will need to be performed?
- Will they be painful?
- What are possible diagnoses other than hemorrhoids?

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#### About Treatment

- What treatments are best?
- What side effects should I watch for?
- How can I ease the discomfort?
- Will I need surgery?

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#### About Coping

- How can I ease pain while going to the bathroom?
- How do I tell friends and family about this embarrassing problem?

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