

Article 867

Overview

Hemorrhoid surgery is done to remove or reduce the size of hemorrhoids. Hemorrhoids are swollen blood vessels in and around the anus and lower rectum. They are classified as internal, meaning inside the anus, or external, meaning outside the anus.

Who is a candidate for the procedure?

Many times, hemorrhoidal swelling resolves on its own. Conservative medical treatment can clear up other hemorrhoids. Hemorrhoid surgery may be performed when hemorrhoids cause severe pain or bleeding. It may also be recommended if internal hemorrhoids prolapse, or stick too far out of the anus.

How is the procedure performed?

Hemorrhoid surgery may be done in a doctor's office or in a hospital. It is done using anesthesia, a medicine that makes a person unaware of pain. Local anesthesia may be applied to one small part of the body so no pain is felt in the area of surgery. Or a person can be put completely to sleep with medicines, called general anesthesia. In this type of pain control, a person feels no pain anywhere in the body. There are five methods used to remove or reduce the size of hemorrhoids. They are:

- » Cryosurgery. The hemorrhoid is frozen with liquid nitrogen.
- » Hemorrhoidectomy. The surgeon uses instruments to permanently remove the swollen part of the blood vessel.
- » Laser surgery. The hemorrhoidal tissue is burned away with a laser beam.
- » Rubber band ligation. A rubber band is placed around the base of the hemorrhoid. The band cuts pinches the excessive tissue, until it shrivels and falls off, leaving a flat vein.
- » Sclerotherapy. A chemical solution is injected around the blood vessel to shrink the hemorrhoid.

What happens right after the procedure?

If a surgical hemorrhoidectomy is performed, the person will go to a surgical recovery room for a short time after surgery.

- » Fluids are offered.
- » Pain medicine is given as needed.
- » The surgical site is checked for bleeding.
- » The person is discharged when he or she is comfortable and able to keep fluids down.

What happens later at home?

At home, a person is expected to:

- » avoid lifting, pushing, pulling, or straining
- » drink six to eight glasses of fluid a day
- » eat a diet high in fiber
- » sit in a warm bath three or four times a day
- » slowly increase activity
- » take a laxative or stool softener to prevent constipation
- » take pain medicine as needed

What are the potential complications after the procedure?

Surgery can cause bleeding, infection, or allergic reaction to anesthesia. Any new or worsening symptoms should be reported to the healthcare provider.