

Patient Information Leaflet

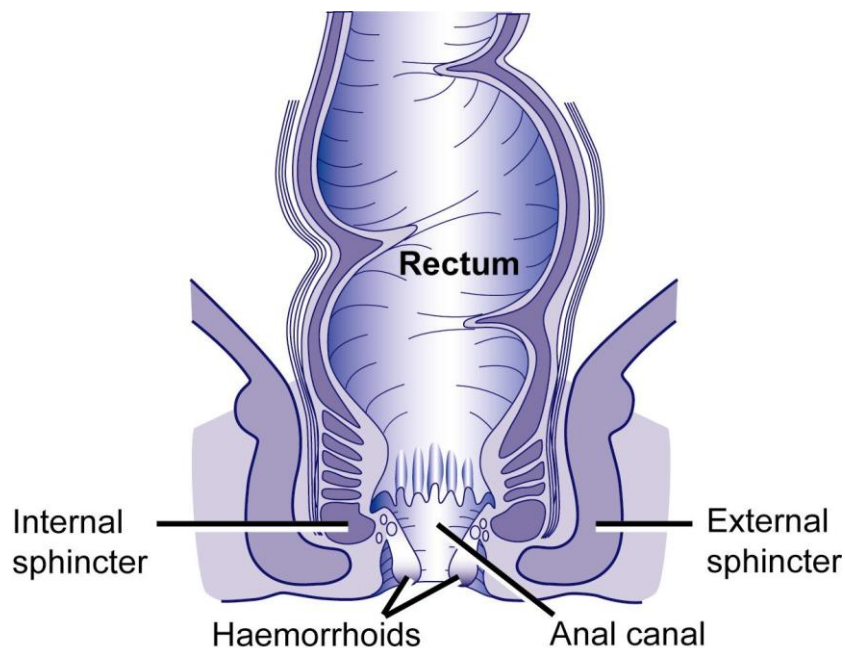


Haemorrhoids - Injecting

Haemorrhoids

What are haemorrhoids?

Everyone has swellings in the anal canal (back passage) called anal cushions. These bulges in the lining of the anal canal act like the washer on a tap and help to prevent leaks from the back passage and maintain continence. Over time these swellings can lose their normal structure and become stretched. This can cause them to bleed, or protrude outside the anus (prolapse). When this happens they are called haemorrhoids, or piles. They can lead to symptoms including bleeding, discomfort, itching and a feeling of incomplete bowel emptying. It is not known why some people suffer from haemorrhoids and others do not. There is an association with constipation and straining, but they can be associated with a normal bowel habit. They are more common in some families, and during or after pregnancy. Up to one in three people will suffer from haemorrhoids during their lifetime. There are a number of different treatments. Injecting haemorrhoids is sometimes helpful for more minor degrees of haemorrhoids.



What is injecting haemorrhoids?

Injecting haemorrhoids is a particularly effective treatment for haemorrhoids that bleed. It is sometimes called sclerotherapy. It involves injecting a small amount of a chemical called phenol (usually 5 per cent phenol in almond oil) into the base of the haemorrhoids which causes them to shrink in size. This can take a number of weeks to be effective, so you should not expect immediate results.

What should I do when I get home?

You may experience some discomfort or a feeling of fullness in the anus for a day or so after the injection. This is quite normal. You should take regular painkillers (e.g. paracetamol) if needed.

You can bathe or shower as you wish. You can return to normal activities as soon as you feel comfortable.

You may see some minor spots of blood on the stools or on the paper when you wipe yourself after opening your bowels. This will settle with time.

Complications following injection of haemorrhoids are very rare. Very occasionally it can cause problems with the urinary system in men. If you have more severe pain, or a high temperature following the injection you should go to your nearest hospital.

Can I prevent the haemorrhoids from coming back?

Unfortunately, having your haemorrhoids injected does not guarantee that they will never come back. Injection usually improves symptoms for a few months, but in many cases the injections need to be repeated. Increasing the fibre in your diet and your fluid intake can help prevent further problems with haemorrhoids. A high fibre diet is known to be as effective as injections for preventing further problems. We know that avoiding straining and constipation is the most useful thing patients can do to prevent the problem coming back. If the fibre content of your diet is not sufficient to keep your stools soft, then a fibre supplement (such as Fybogel) can help.

What should I do if I want further information?

If you have a problem or a question immediately after you go home, please call the Outpatient Department during normal opening hours (Mon-Fri 9pm-5pm). If the problem occurs outside these hours, please contact your family doctor or district nurse for advice.

Contact details:

St Mark's Hospital, Watford Road, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 3UJ

Out-patient appointments - 020 8235 4061

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