



## **Hemorrhoids**

Hemorrhoids are dilated veins around the anus. There are two types of hemorrhoids, external and internal. External hemorrhoids are covered with skin and do not bleed. They can thrombose (clot) causing severe pain. If this happens, the hemorrhoid is opened and drained. Internal hemorrhoids start inside the anal canal. They rarely cause pain or develop blood clots. With time they can enlarge and prolapse through the anal sphincter. When swollen, they can bleed after a bowel movement or abdominal straining.

The cause of hemorrhoids is increased pressure in the veins due to chronic constipation, abdominal straining and pregnancy. Symptoms are usually tissue protruding through the rectum, bleeding, or pain. Severe pain usually indicates a thrombosed hemorrhoid.

Refraining from straining with bowel movements and correcting constipation or diarrhea can reduce the symptoms associated with hemorrhoids. It is important to consume 20-35 grams of dietary fiber daily. Stool softeners, increased water intake and exercise are also important. Rectal suppositories such as Anusol HC or Preparation H may also be helpful. Tucks can help soothe the discomfort. Use of "Tucks" (pads soaked in witch hazel) are helpful to keep the area clean and is soothing to the tissues. Heavy bleeding associated with internal hemorrhoids may require surgical banding or hemorrhoidectomy with a surgeon. Thrombosed external hemorrhoids can be treated in the office. Incision with removal of the clot can provide instant relief.