

Hemorrhoids: Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Abnormally large or painful conglomerates of vessels, supporting tissues, and overlying mucous membrane or skin of the anorectal area
Bright red bleeding on the surface of the stool, on the toilet tissue, and/or in the toilet bowl

QUICK REVIEW

- The veins in the rectal area contain no valves, so factors that increase congestion of blood flow in the region can lead to hemorrhoid formation.

The common causes of anal itching include: tissue trauma from excessive use of harsh toilet paper, *Candida albicans*, parasitic infections, and food allergies.

A high-fiber diet is perhaps the most important component in the prevention of hemorrhoids.

Flavonoid preparations have been helpful in relieving hemorrhoids by strengthening the veins.

- Studies suggest that aortic glycosaminoglycan preparations should be used as the "drug of first choice" in the treatment of hemorrhoids.

TREATMENT SUMMARY

As with all diseases, the primary treatment for hemorrhoids is prevention. This goal involves reducing the factors that may be responsible for increasing pelvic congestion: straining during defecation sitting or standing for prolonged periods of time, or underlying liver disease. A high-fiber diet is crucial for the maintenance of proper bowel activity. Fiber supplements, flavonoids, aortic GAGs, and various botanical medicines such as butcher's broom are appropriate supplementary measures.

Warm sitz baths and topical preparations are useful to ameliorate the discomfort, but have only temporary effects.

Diet

A high-complex-carbohydrate diet rich in dietary fiber is recommended. The diet should contain liberal amounts of flavonoid-rich foods, such as blackberries, citrus fruits, cherries, and blueberries to strengthen vein structures.

Nutritional Supplements

- Vitamin C: 500-1,000 mg three times per day

- Flavonoids:

HER: 1,000-3,000 mg per day Citrus bioflavonoids, rutin, and/or hesperidin: 3,000-6,000 mg per day

- Aortic GAGs: 100 mg per day

Botanical Medicines

- Butcher's broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) extract (9-11% ruscogenin content): 100 mg three times per day

Physical Medicine

- Hydrotherapy: warm sitz baths to relieve uncomplicated hemorrhoids