



UNIVERSITY OF EMBU

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

HEALTH MESSAGE ON HEMORRHOIDS

Hemorrhoids, also called piles, are swollen veins in the anus and lower rectum. Hemorrhoids can develop inside the rectum (internal hemorrhoids) or under the skin around the anus (external hemorrhoids).

Nearly three out of four adults have hemorrhoids from time to time. When the walls of these vessels stretch, they can become irritated.

Hemorrhoids may occur for the following reasons/ causes:

1. **Diarrhea:** Hemorrhoids can occur after cases of chronic diarrhea, due to frequent straining hence increasing pressure on the walls of the mucosa blood vessel lining.
2. **Chronic constipation:** Straining to remove stool puts additional pressure to the walls of the blood vessels; which may result in hemorrhoids.
3. **Heavy lifting:** Repeatedly lifting heavy objects can lead to hemorrhoids.
4. **Pregnancy:** During pregnancy, tissues in the rectum become weaker, and hormones cause veins to relax and swell. Hemorrhoids may occur in up to 35% of pregnant women.
5. **Aging:** Hemorrhoids are most common among adults over age of 50 years. Due to weakening of the anal structures. However young people and children can also get them.
6. **Sitting for long:** Spending a long time in a seated position, especially on the toilet, can cause hemorrhoids.
7. **Anal intercourse:** They can cause new hemorrhoids or worsen existing ones.
8. **Weight:** Research has linked being overweight to a higher chance of hemorrhoids. This may result from increased pressure within the abdomen.
9. **Genetics:** Some people inherit tendency to develop hemorrhoids.



Symptoms of Hemorrhoids include:

- i. Bleeding from the anal area.
- ii. Itching or irritations in the anal area.
- iii. Discomfort, pain, or soreness around the anus.
- iv. Lumps and swelling in the anal region.

Lifestyle changes that can help lower the risk of hemorrhoids include:

- ✓ **Eating a healthy diet:** Eating plenty food rich in fiber such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, can help keep stool soft. Staying hydrated can also ease constipation. Taking at least eight glasses of water daily.
- ✓ **Avoid straining:** A person should try not to strain when using the toilet. Straining puts pressure on the veins in the lower rectum.
- ✓ **Going to bathroom when needed:** It is best to avoid waiting for long to use the toilet. The longer a person waits; the drier the stool will be.
- ✓ **Getting regular physical activities:** Exercise helps stool move through the bowel, making bowel movement more regular.
- ✓ **Maintaining moderate body weight:** Being overweight, raises the risk of having hemorrhoids.
- ✓ **Avoid foods that are processed:** foods rich in sugar, fats or refined carbohydrates can increase constipation and risk of hemorrhoids.

COMPLICATIONS OF HEMORRHOIDS.

- i. Bleeding.
- ii. Anemia.
- iii. Infection.
- iv. Blood clot.
- v. Urine retention.

NOTE: Adhering to life style changes significantly lowers cases of hemorrhoids and hence reduces cases of morbidity and mortality associated with complications.