

**St Mark's Hospital advice sheet: Banding of Haemorrhoids (Piles)
Your Questions Answered**

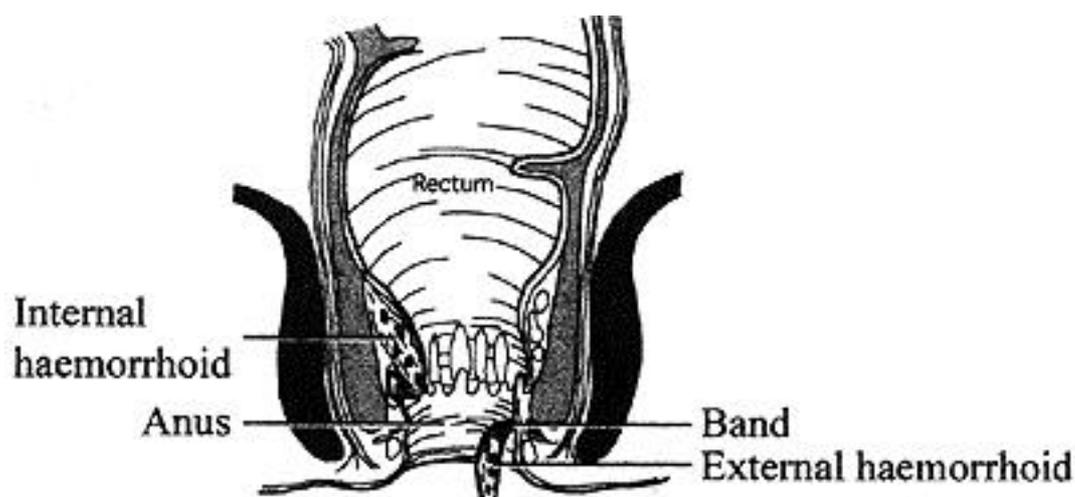
Banding of Haemorrhoids (Piles)

Your Questions Answered

What are haemorrhoids?

Haemorrhoids (commonly known as "piles") are swollen blood vessels in the anal canal (back passage - see diagram). This creates swellings, similar to the varicose veins that some people have on their legs. They are very common.

One in three people experience haemorrhoids at some time in their life.



The most usual cause is constipation: this is because straining to open the bowels causes congestion of, and eventually enlargement of, the veins in the anal canal. Haemorrhoids also seem to occur more frequently in some families, and are more common during or after pregnancy. They can cause bleeding and discomfort, and may protrude outside the anal canal.

What is "banding" and how will it help me?

The doctor who examined you felt that banding your piles would be the best treatment option for you. This involves using a small instrument to put a very tight elastic band over the haemorrhoid. This band cuts off the blood supply so that the haemorrhoid should drop off, usually within 3-7 days after the banding (see diagram).

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What should I do when I get home?

- Avoid using any applicators or creams directly into the anus.
- Try not to have your bowels open until the next day if possible, but do not worry if you have to open your bowels.
- Avoid strenuous exercise for the rest of the day. For example, avoid playing sport, jogging or riding a bike.
- You can bath or shower as you wish.
- You should be able to get back to your normal life the next day.
- You may well experience some pain or discomfort for a day or so after the banding. You should take your regular household painkillers (such as paracetamol) if you need to. Very occasionally these do not work effectively and you may need to ask your pharmacist or contact your GP for something stronger. If the pain does not ease within a couple of days you should contact the outpatients department.

What should I do if I bleed before I get home?

- A small amount of bleeding, particularly when you open your bowels on your stool or on the toilet paper when you wipe yourself, is normal. You may notice bleeding especially when the haemorrhoids fall off, leaving a small raw area inside the anus, usually about 3-7 days after banding. You probably will not see the haemorrhoids or bands as they will pass down the toilet with a bowel motion.
- Very rarely is there more major bleeding. If you see a lot of fresh bright red blood or pass clots, you should seek urgent medical attention.
- We will normally want to see you again in 6-12 weeks to check that the banding has been successful. Sometimes the banding needs to be repeated.

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Can I prevent the haemorrhoids coming back?

Unfortunately, having your haemorrhoids banded does not guarantee that they will never come back. You now know that you have a tendency to develop haemorrhoids, so it makes sense to try to avoid this happening in the future.

Some doctors feel that the best way of preventing haemorrhoids is to avoid straining to open your bowels, and to go when you feel the urge rather than putting it off because you are busy. If you have a tendency to constipation, try to increase the amount of fibre in your diet. Fibre forms the structure of cereals, fruit and vegetables. It is not completely digested and absorbed by the body, so it provides bulk to the stools. This helps the movement of waste through the intestines, resulting in soft stools which are easy to pass. See below for suggestions on foods rich in fibre.

FOODS RICH IN FIBRE

WHOLEMEAL BREAD

WHOLEGRAIN CEREALS (e.g. shredded wheat, weetabix, branflakes, porridge, muesli)

WHOLEMEAL PASTA

BROWN RICE

BEANS (including baked beans)

PEAS

LENTILS

WHOLEMEAL BISCUITS (e.g. digestive, rye crispbread, oatcakes)

FRUIT (especially if eaten with skin or pips)

VEGETABLES (especially if eaten with skin or seeds, e.g. jacket potatoes)

NUTS, SEEDS & DRIED FRUIT

- You should increase the amount of fibre in your diet gradually - a sudden increase can cause abdominal discomfort and wind.
- If fibre in your food is not enough to keep your stool soft then consider taking a fibre supplement, such as Fybogel (you can buy this at the chemist or your doctor can prescribe it).
- If you become pregnant you will need to take special care not to become constipated.
- It is also important to ensure that you drink plenty of fluid. Try to take at least 6-8 cups of fluid a day.

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- The fluid you take can be any type, including water, tea, coffee, unsweetened fruit juice, squash or soup.
- If you feel that you would like further guidance on diet, your doctor may be able to refer you to a dietician.

With thanks to the Friends of St. Mark's Hospital for their support.