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Hemorrhoids: Treatment and Prevention

A hemorrhoid is a normal cushion of blood vessels in the anal canal. We all have hemorrhoids. They are divided in the external (outside) and internal (inside) groups. They have a purpose and a function in the venous drainage of the area as well as sensation and continence.

Aggressive treatment of hemorrhoids was common practice, but we have learned that prevention and maintenance are the best forms of treatment. Hemorrhoids can swell, prolapse, thrombose or just bleed. Predisposing factors are constipation, straining, sitting for long periods of time, heavy lifting and pregnancy.

General recommendations are: high fiber diet, increased daily fluid intake, a daily fiber supplement (Metamucil™, Hydrocil™, Benefiber™ etc). Take one tablespoon in a glass of water in the morning. We recommend powders over pills. Freshly ground Flax seed is a great natural alternative. In the office we will do a complete anorectal examination and discuss the findings with you. We treat many of your hemorrhoid problems at the office.

A **thrombosed external hemorrhoid** is an acute and tender “bulge” in the external anal canal, the size of a grape. In some patients under local anesthesia we can remove the hemorrhoid in the office, relieving some of the acute symptoms. Early diagnosis is very important.

When the **internal hemorrhoids** swell up and prolapse (come out) they can bleed and cause other local symptoms such as itching and burning. In some patients we can apply an internal rubber band that will eliminate the hemorrhoid. This is a short procedure done in the office, usually without major discomfort.

Some previous attacks of hemorrhoids can cause **skin tags** to remain in the area and cause multiple local symptoms such as difficulty cleaning, itching and burning. If bothersome, these skin tags are removed under local anesthesia and sedation at one of our same day surgical facilities.

Some hemorrhoids are so severe that they may require surgical treatment with a formal hemorrhoidectomy. Consult your doctor for a check up to confirm the diagnosis, because other more severe conditions can present with similar symptoms.

Even though these conditions are minor, they are best treated by a Board Certified Colon and Rectal Surgeon, an expert in this field.

Please go to our website www.drisaac.net for more information. Look for patient education and instructions.