

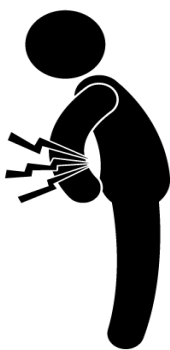
Self-Care – Haemorrhoids (piles)

Taking care of your “SELF” – Supporting Everyone to Live Freely
This is a self-care guide designed for those working in care homes, residential homes and assisted living.

The information provided in this guide does not replace person centred clinical advice.

The following information should be used as a guide when advising or purchasing self-care treatments for people residing in a care home, residential home or assisted living. Self-care medication and medical products are not always the most appropriate choice for treating minor ailments. Sometimes starting with a lifestyle change or trying natural remedies can be more effective.

Should you have any concern, at any time around self-care items being purchased on behalf of the resident or being brought in by relatives for the residents use, please discuss with your community pharmacist or GP practice.



What are haemorrhoids (piles)?

Haemorrhoids, also known as piles, are swollen veins and muscles around the anus or inside the anal canal. If external to the anus, they appear as small, round discoloured lumps and can be felt. In many cases, haemorrhoids don't cause symptoms and some people don't even realise they have them.

What causes haemorrhoids?

- There is no exact cause of haemorrhoids. They are associated with increased pressure in the blood vessels in and around the anus
- As pressure builds, blood vessels in the anus become swollen and inflamed
- Many cases are thought to be caused by too much straining on the toilet as a result of prolonged constipation. This is often caused by a lack of fibre in a person's diet

- Chronic (long-term) diarrhoea can also make a person more vulnerable to getting haemorrhoids

Other factors that might increase your risk of developing haemorrhoids:

- Being overweight or obese
- Age – as you get older, your body's supporting tissues get weaker, increasing your risk of haemorrhoids
- Having a family history of haemorrhoids
- A persistent cough or repeated vomiting
- Sitting down for long periods of time


Symptoms of haemorrhoids:

- You may notice or the resident may complain of bleeding after passing a stool – the blood will usually be bright red
- The resident may complain of an itchy or sore bottom
- You may notice or the resident may complain of a lump hanging down outside of the anus
- You may notice or the resident may complain of a mucus discharge after passing stools
- The resident may complain that they have the feeling their bowel hasn't completely emptied
- The resident may complain of soreness around the anus and on inspection you may notice redness and swelling

Haemorrhoids are not usually too painful, unless their blood supply slows down or is interrupted

Relieving the symptoms of haemorrhoids, self-care:

- Sitting in a shallow bath of warm water a few times a day will provide relief if the haemorrhoid is really uncomfortable, it will also help keep the area clean
- Ensure that when the resident needs to toilet they are able to go straight away. Advise them not to ignore the urge to go to the toilet as this can lead to constipation, hard stools, and straining
- Assist or advise the resident that when toileting they should sit for as long as they need to
- Rushing passing stools can cause straining and make the haemorrhoid(s) worse
- Wipe the area gently with soft, unscented toilet tissue or wipes
- Assisting or advising the resident to place an ice pack on their bottom, over the haemorrhoid can help to relieve the pain and reduce the haemorrhoid size. Place the ice pack on the area for 15 to 20 minutes at a time, keeping a cloth between the ice and skin to prevent skin damage

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- Encouraging the resident to take more fibre in their diet which will help soften the stools, making toileting less uncomfortable or painful. This can be achieved by increasing the amount of fruit, vegetables, cereals and wholegrain bread in the diet
 - Avoid painkillers that contain codeine, such as co-codamol, as they are a common cause of constipation. However, simple painkillers such as paracetamol may help
 - Encouraging more water intake will help prevent constipation and make it easier for the resident to pass stools
 - If able, encouraging gentle exercise will help to relieve the discomfort and encourage bowel movements

If the above self-care is not helping and the resident is still in discomfort, there are medications available to purchase over the counter to help with the symptoms. Creams, ointments and suppositories are available from pharmacies without a prescription. They can be used to relieve any swelling and discomfort. ***These products should be used according to the patient information leaflet (PIL) only for the recommended length of time as indicated in the PIL.***

It is advised to discuss these options with the resident's local community pharmacist. Please note if you are not dealing with the resident's usual pharmacy then you will need to take a list of the resident's current medications so the pharmacist can ensure there are no drug interactions.

You should only need to see a GP if you have concerns about the haemorrhoids

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References:

NHS Choices - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/piles-haemorrhoids/treatment/>

<https://www.saintlukeskc.org/health-library/treating-hemorrhoids-self-care>

Bupa - <https://www.bupa.co.uk/health-information/directory/h/haemorrhoids>

Patient.info - <https://patient.info/health/rectal-bleeding-blood-in-faeces/piles-haemorrhoids>