



Haemorrhoids

Patient information leaflet



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Common Ailments Service

Only use this leaflet if your pharmacist has advised you about your condition.

Haemorrhoids (piles) are lumps inside and around the anus (bottom). They are blood vessels that have filled with more blood than usual. Piles can be internal (high up inside) or external (closer to the anus than internal piles). Some people develop internal and external piles at the same time.

Symptoms of piles include:

- bleeding after you poo (usually bright red blood)
- feeling itchy around your bottom
- feeling that you still need to poo after going to the toilet
- mucus in your underwear or on the toilet paper after you have wiped your bottom
- lumps around your bottom
- pain around your bottom

You may be more likely to get piles:

- if you have constipation (difficulty passing poo) and strain too hard when pooing
- if you are overweight
- as you get older
- if you have a low fibre diet
- if having piles runs in your family
- if you do heavy lifting
- if you have a cough that has lasted for several weeks or longer
- if you are pregnant or have given birth recently



Treatment and Prevention

Piles symptoms will often settle down after a few days without needing treatment.

Medicines that can help

These medicines are not suitable for everyone. Make sure you have asked your pharmacist for advice about what treatment is best for you.

Your pharmacy will have medicines to help with the symptoms, but these products will not cure your piles.

Constipation and straining on the toilet can make your piles worse. It may help to take a medicine called a **laxative** to make it easier to poo, for example, **ispaghula husk**, **macrogol** or **lactulose**. Ask your pharmacist for advice.

Paracetamol tablets can help to relieve the pain. Do not take painkillers containing codeine as they can cause constipation. If your piles are bleeding, do not take ibuprofen.

There are **creams**, **ointments** and **suppositories** that can help with the itching, swelling and pain of piles. Creams and ointments treat symptoms inside and around your bottom. Suppositories treat the symptoms inside your bottom.



Treatment and Prevention

Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine.

If you are concerned about any side effects from a treatment, report it to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can also report side effects on the Yellow Card [app](#) or [website](#).

Other things that can help

To treat the piles and stop them from coming back:

- eat plenty of fibre, such as fruit, vegetables, cereals, beans, nuts, seeds and wholegrain foods like bread and rice
- drink plenty of water
- do not drink too much caffeine, alcohol or sugary drinks
- avoid straining when you poo, and go to the toilet when you need to – don't delay
- try to lose weight if you're overweight – [free NHS help is available](#)
- try to exercise regularly
- use damp wipes instead of dry toilet paper, and pat (rather than rub) your bottom dry
- take a warm bath to ease itching and pain
- use an ice pack wrapped in a towel to ease discomfort
- gently push external piles back inside



When to Get Help

If you have never had piles before it is important that you see your GP to confirm nothing else is causing your symptoms. Your pharmacist can give you 1 treatment for piles to use while you are waiting to be seen by your GP.

Contact your GP or call 111 if you:

- have tummy pain that does not go away quickly
- have diarrhoea (watery poo) at night for several nights
- have lost weight and you do not know why
- have a lasting change in your toilet habits, for example, you are pooing more often and your poo is looser
- have a painful lump or other change around your bottom
- keep getting piles
- have piles that are getting worse or there's no improvement after 7 days of treatment at home

Urgently contact your GP or call 111 if you have piles and:

- your temperature is very high
- you feel hot and shivery and generally unwell
- you have pus leaking from your piles

Go to A&E or call 999 if you have piles and:

- bleeding that does not stop
- are losing a lot of blood – for example the toilet water turns red or you see large blood clots
- you are in severe pain

If you are worried that your condition is not getting better, or is getting worse, talk to your GP.



More information

For more information on haemorrhoids or a medicine, talk to your pharmacist or look at the following websites:

NHS 111 Wales: <https://111.wales.nhs.uk/Haemorrhoids/>

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

Medicines A-Z: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/>

Information from the above resources is included in this leaflet.



Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This leaflet is also available in Welsh.

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