

# PATIENT INFORMATION: SIGMOIDOSCOPY OR FLEXIBLE SIGMOIDOSCOPY AND HEMORRHOID BANDING

## General Information:

In this examination, your doctor will insert into your rectum a lubricated tube about 25 cm long and slightly thicker than a finger. The tube, called a sigmoidoscope, has lenses and lights that allow your doctor to see inside the rectum and adjacent colon.

The evening prior to the test, your doctor may also want you to have a small enema (called a fleet). You should try to retain the enema for approximately 15 to 20 minutes before expelling it. No solid food after midnight the day before your surgery. You may have clear fluids only (i.e. black tea, ginger ale, jello, clear broth, apple juice, colourless Gatorade or water) up until three hours before your scheduled arrival time. Refrain from chewing gum, tobacco and smoking.

Please report to the Day Surgery Unit at the time specified. You will receive another fleet enema by the nurse when you arrive. When the doctor is ready to

perform the test, you will be taken to the operating room and will receive sedation if needed. You should have a driver available to take you home in case sedation is required.

## Procedure:

The nurse will ask you to lie on your left side with your knees drawn to your chest on an examination table, or in the knee chest position. Your doctor may do a rectal examination prior to inserting the sigmoidoscope. The sigmoidoscope is gently inserted into the rectum, and will cause some discomfort. Once the scope is inserted into the rectum, the doctor may need to inflate a little air to better view the area. This may cause a cramping sensation.

At this time the doctor may remove a piece of tissue (biopsy). The specimen will be sent to Pathology for testing and will aid your doctor in diagnosing your problem. Your doctor may also be able to band hemorrhoids through a scope

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called an anoscope at the same time if required (doctor must be a surgeon).

### **After the Procedure:**

You will go to the Recovery Room after the procedure and will be given some time to rest. Your doctor will discuss with you what was seen during the examination. He/she may request to see you in 2-3 weeks when the results of your biopsy are available. The doctor will discuss your diet with you and arrange a follow-up appointment if required. If you have sedation, you will require a ride home and must not drive for 24 hours. Please do not be alarmed if you experience a small amount of rectal bleeding if you have had biopsies taken or hemorrhoids banded.

### **When to Call the Doctor:**

- For severe abdominal pain, nausea or fever.
- If rectal bleeding is more than streaks of blood on tissue.

### **What are hemorrhoids?**

Hemorrhoids are swollen and inflamed veins around the anus or in the lower rectum. The rectum is the last part of the large intestine leading to the anus. The

anus is the opening at the end of the digestive tract where bowel contents leave the body.

External hemorrhoids are located under the skin around the anus. Internal hemorrhoids develop in the lower rectum. Internal hemorrhoids may protrude, or prolapse, through the anus. Most prolapsed hemorrhoids shrink back inside the rectum on their own. Severely prolapsed hemorrhoids may protrude permanently and require treatment.

### **What are the symptoms of hemorrhoids?**

The most common symptom of internal hemorrhoids is bright red blood on stool, on toilet paper, or in the toilet bowl after a bowel movement. Internal hemorrhoids that are not prolapsed are usually not painful. Prolapsed hemorrhoids often cause pain, discomfort, and anal itching.

Blood clots may form in external hemorrhoids. A blood clot in a vein is called a thrombosis. Thrombosed external hemorrhoids cause bleeding, painful swelling, or a hard lump around the anus. When the blood clot dissolves,

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extra skin is left behind. This skin can become irritated or itch.

Excessive straining, rubbing, or cleaning around the anus may make symptoms, such as itching and irritation, worse.

Hemorrhoids are not dangerous or life threatening. Symptoms usually go away within a few days, and some people with hemorrhoids never have symptoms.

### What causes hemorrhoids?

Swelling in the anal or rectal veins causes hemorrhoids. Several factors may cause this swelling, including

- chronic constipation or diarrhea
- straining during bowel movements
- sitting on the toilet for long periods of time
- a lack of fiber in the diet

Another cause of hemorrhoids is the weakening of the connective tissue in the rectum and anus that occurs with age.

Pregnancy can cause hemorrhoids by increasing pressure in the abdomen, which may enlarge the veins in the lower rectum and anus. For most women, hemorrhoids caused by pregnancy disappear after childbirth.

### How are hemorrhoids treated?

If at-home treatments do not relieve symptoms, medical treatments may be needed. Outpatient treatments can be performed in a doctor's office or a hospital. Outpatient treatment for internal hemorrhoids includes **Rubber Band Ligation** where the doctor places a special rubber band around the base of the hemorrhoid. The band cuts off circulation, causing the hemorrhoid to shrink. This procedure should be performed only by a surgeon and can be done at the same time as your colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy is performed.

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