

Thrombosed External Hemorrhoids

What is a thrombosed external hemorrhoid?

You have been diagnosed with a thrombosed external hemorrhoid. Everyone has external hemorrhoids, but in some patients, a clot can develop in the tissue, causing the area to swell and become very tender. This can be caused by constipation or diarrhea, but also heavy weight lifting, long periods of sitting or during pregnancy and/or labor/delivery. This is called a thrombosed external hemorrhoid.

Symptoms

Most external hemorrhoids do not cause symptoms, but when this clot develops, it will swell and can cause severe pain, especially in the first 2-3 days. The clot may later rupture and if so, bleeding can occur.

Diagnosis

Your provider will have seen the external hemorrhoid on physical inspection of the area.

Treatment Options

If the thrombosed external hemorrhoid is seen promptly (within 2-3 days), there may be an option to “lance” it, removing the clot, and providing prompt symptomatic relief. Most, however, are seen later in their course, when it is too late to do this. In these cases, topical ointments are commonly prescribed, along with the suggestions below. The clot typically will resolve on its own, taking from a few days to a few weeks. In some patients, a residual “tag” is left behind.

Treatment includes heat therapy 3x daily for 10-15 mins at a time (heating pad on low, sitz baths, etc.), pressure off-loading (more standing, less sitting, avoid long periods of time on the toilet) and increasing the intake of soluble fiber and water. Most people require 15-20 grams of added dietary fiber daily, obtained by taking any of the “over the counter” soluble fiber powders or fiber gummies. If these do not soften the stool, ask your provider for additional suggestions as keeping the stool soft and avoiding constipation is extremely important in the healing process. Pain management may be with over the counter medications such as ibuprofen, acetaminophen, etc., and/or lidocaine topical ointment 4-5%. Please follow package instructions.

You may also be prescribed a topical ointment to help lessen any symptoms. This is only available through a specialty compounding pharmacy. For these ointments, a pea-sized amount is placed into the anal canal with a gloved finger as directed. If you are prescribed topical nitroglycerin ointment, you should be cautioned to not use any erectile dysfunction medications (Cialis, Viagra, etc.) while using the ointment as the combination of medications can cause a dangerous drop in blood pressure.

Internal hemorrhoids

If you also have symptomatic internal hemorrhoids, (bleeding, itching, swelling, prolapse or leakage) you may be advised to have these treated when you are no longer tender in order to minimize the risk of post-banding pain. Your provider utilizes the CRH O’Regan System®, which allows for the banding of your symptomatic hemorrhoids with the lowest documented risk for post banding pain.

Please ask your provider for any additional recommendations, and for further information regarding the CRH O’Regan System®, please visit www.crhsystem.com.

