



Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Laser Treatment for Haemorrhoids

Information for patients



This leaflet has been written to give you information about laser treatment for haemorrhoids.

What are haemorrhoids?

Haemorrhoids, also known as piles, are enlarged blood vessels around the anus (back passage). There are two types: internal and external.

Constipation, pregnancy and childbirth, obesity, and straining, for example while lifting or coughing, can all contribute to the development of haemorrhoids.

What treatments are available?

A variety of treatments are available. The first step is to avoid constipation, straining, and sitting on the toilet for a long time. Drinking plenty of water and eating a high-fibre diet are important. There are also a lot of haemorrhoid creams and ointments available from the chemist or supermarket to help settle down an acute flare-up.

The next step is often to shrink the haemorrhoids by placing rubber bands around them or injection treatment. This can be done quickly and simply in the clinic. For large haemorrhoids, more than one banding treatment may be required to get rid of the haemorrhoids.

For larger or persistent haemorrhoids, surgery is sometimes required. This can involve placing stitches internally to reduce blood supply to the haemorrhoids and reduce the prolapse (HALO procedure). Another option is to cut out the haemorrhoids (haemorrhoidectomy). Laser ablation is another option.

Laser haemorrhoid ablation

This is a minimally invasive technique for moderate to large internal haemorrhoids. It is usually done under general anaesthetic.

The laser fibre is shaped like a thin pencil. It is inserted into the haemorrhoid and laser energy is applied. This causes the haemorrhoids to shrink. The procedure usually takes around 30 minutes.

What are the risks of laser treatment?

All procedures carry some risks. These will be explained to you before the operation. For laser haemorrhoid treatment the risks include:

- Pain is common after any haemorrhoid treatment, although for laser treatment post-operative pain and recovery time are less than for other haemorrhoid operations.
- Bleeding is also a possible complication of any haemorrhoid treatment. This can happen for up to a month after treatment. It is rarely a major concern, but you need to be aware of the possibility.
- Haemorrhoids can recur after laser treatment in 10% of patients.

What to expect after your surgery

After your procedure you will be taken to the recovery ward where you will be looked after by specially trained nurses, under the direction of your anaesthetist. Once the effects of the general anaesthetic have worn off and you are comfortable, you will return to the ward.

Eating and drinking

You can eat and drink normally. We recommend a high fibre diet and drinking six to ten glasses of water every day. You will get additional information at the time of your discharge from hospital.

Moving around

You should start moving around as soon as possible after the procedure. This helps improve your recovery and reduces the risk of certain complications. Once back on the ward, you will be encouraged to get up and walk around.

Leaving hospital

You will be discharged from hospital on the same day.

Going to the toilet

From the day after your operation, you may be given laxatives to help soften the stools and keep you regular. There may be some discomfort and a little bleeding when you go to the toilet. This is to be expected. You might find it helpful to take pain killers 15 to 20 minutes before you try to open your bowels.

Looking after your wound at home

Before you go home, your nurse will give you information about how to look after your wound at home. You will usually not need any dressings. There may be some fluid or discharge from the wound while it is healing. A small panty liner or pad will protect your underwear. You should take a bath or use a bidet, sitz bath, or shower nozzle to keep the area clean.

How long should I stay off work and other normal activities?

- Avoid constipation and straining, especially for the first two weeks after surgery.
- You can have sex as soon as you feel comfortable to do so.
- Do as much as you feel comfortable doing. If you need to take painkillers these may make you drowsy, so you should avoid driving or operating machinery.
- Most people need a few days off work once they go home, but this depends on what you do and how large the haemorrhoids were.

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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