

Hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoid disease can be prevented!

Although they are the brunt of many youthful jokes, having them is no fun, and may be quite painful, as millions of Americans can attest. Hemorrhoids are actually part of normal human anatomy! They are not, as has been popularly believed, terminal branches of a small artery, nor are they simply engorged veins. Instead, they are fibrovascular cushions which line the anal canal and are found in three locations, one at the left center, and one each in the right upper and lower "corners". They are important for helping us keep ourselves continent, i.e. keep us from having a bowel movement at an inappropriate time. They do this by becoming engorged when abdominal pressure is increased (such as when straining to lift something) so that the anal canal is completely 'blocked.'

However, in a constipated individual, there is increased intra-abdominal pressure on an ongoing basis, causing these hemorrhoids to become chronically engorged. This makes stool passage painful and difficult. "But I'm not constipated!" you might say. "I have a bowel movement every day." Well, let's look at what constipation really is.

Constipation In the United States, the average individual has one bowel movement per day, averaging about 100 grams each. Contrast that with non-Western cultures who have beans and whole grains as a staple food, have three bowel movements per day, and have virtually NO hemorrhoids. Their total daily stool weight is around 400 grams. In other words, they eliminate nearly four times as much stool as we do each day. By that definition of normal stool volume and weight, most Americans are constipated.

The critical importance of avoiding constipation

You might say, "So what is so important about that? It sounds like a major inconvenience to me!" Did you know that such cultures as I just described have not only NO hemorrhoidal disease, but also have virtually none of the following: colon cancer, gallstones, diverticulitis, appendicitis, diabetes, coronary heart disease, varicose veins or constipation! All of these diseases are common in the United States and other westernised nations. Therefore, hemorrhoids can be thought of as a "red flag" telling us, "You're too constipated. You had better change your diet, or not only will you have hemorrhoids, but perhaps some

of these other diseases as well." How can you change? The key is in dietary *fiber*.

Fiber: The Key to bowel-related disease prevention

Fiber is that portion of our food which is not digested and absorbed from the gut. It is like the strands in a celery stalk, like small strands of 'wood.' Fiber is made up of material which our body cannot digest, and therefore passes through our intestines essentially in the same form in which it was eaten. It moves through the complete length of the gut, adding bulk and water to the stool. This makes the stool softer and adds bulk and shape to our food, giving us a sense of fullness after eating, without adding the calories. The increased bulk also causes the stool to move through faster, minimising contact of harmful stool toxins with the intestinal wall. This benefit is what is believed to reduce the incidence of colon cancer. The average American gets only about 10 grams of fiber in the diet. Contrast this with those cultures which do not have these diseases: they get an average of 30 grams of fiber each day. Where do we get all that fiber? Well, up until early this century, most of it came from our whole grain flour.

Whole Grain Flour: a major source of dietary fiber & other nutrients

A kernel of wheat is made up of an outer layer of bran and an inner compartment filled mostly with endosperm and the wheat germ. The fiber is contained in the outer bran. Wheat contains twenty-five vitamins, minerals and proteins (mostly in the germ). Among these is vitamin E, which is necessary for absorption of vitamin A and for general vitality. Lack of vitamin E can lead to heart disease.

Wheat germ also contains B vitamins and high-quality proteins. The outer bran, as long as it is intact, keeps the grain from spoiling. Once the outer protective bran is cracked, the grain spoils rapidly: within 72 hours, the germ oil becomes rancid, the flour grows moldy and the vitamins oxidize.

Most of today's bread is made from 'refined' flour. Naturally ground wheat flour is coarse and has a brown tint to it. In an

Foods which do NOT contain fiber

- Bouillon
- Butter, margarine
- Cheese
- Dairy products
- Gelatin; jelly
- Ketchup; Mustard
- Maple syrup
- Meat, poultry, fish
- Mayonnaise
- Oil: cooking or salad
- Olives
- Pickles
- Sour cream
- Sugar

effort to make the flour whiter, smoother and resistant to spoiling, roller milling was developed which essentially crushes the grain, after which the germ and bran are sifted out, leaving only the starch for white flour. This flour is essentially devoid of good nutrition: it is "empty calories," i.e. it actually needs to "steal" from your body to get the nutrients it needs in order to be utilized. Refined flour can be stored for long periods of time without spoiling, however it has several tremendous health disadvantages when compared to more naturally ground, fresh flour:

1. While all 20 natural vitamins are destroyed through refining only 4 are returned to "enriched" flour. These 4 B vitamins were added back to flour because of diseases which became common in the 1930s with widespread refining.
2. A majority of most minerals found naturally in wheat are lost in the roller milling process.
3. Refining the flour and separating it from the bran *removes the fiber* content of natural whole grains.
4. In the refining process chemicals are used to bleach the flour. In the past, powerful bleaching agents have been used for years before their destructive effects were discovered. Current agents are said to be even more powerful.

Standard treatments for hemorrhoids

1. Alleviate constipation. High fiber diet; fiber supplements; liberal water intake; stool softeners.
2. Sitz baths to soothe flare-ups.
3. Hemorrhoidal creams, suppositories, astringents (such as Tucks pads with witch hazel, etc.)
4. Avoid prolonged sitting on commode.
5. Non-operative out-patient treatments: rubber band ligation, infrared coagulation, sclerotherapy: all equally effective.
6. Operative hemorrhoidectomy for refractory cases.

BREAD			CEREALS			SOUPS			MEAT			VEGETABLES						
Whole wheat	1 slice	2.1	Bran	&	2/3 cup	4.0	Lentil	1 cup	5.5	Egg	1	0	Asparagus	4	0.9	Beets, boiled	1/2 cup	2.1
Rye	1 slice	1.2	Bran 100%		1/2 cup	10.0	Minestrone	1	1.2	Peanut Butter	2 Tbs.	2.4	Avocado, fresh	1/2	2.2	Broccoli, boiled	1 cup	3.2
White	1 slice	?	Oat bran		1 cup	7.0	Crm of	1 cup	2.0	Peanuts, roasted	1/4 cup	2.9	Beans, Baked	1/2 cup	11.0	Brussel sprouts	1/2 cup	2.3
			Dinner Roll		1	0.8				Walnuts, chopped	1/4 cup	1.6	--- Kidney (chili)	1/2 cup	9.7	Cabbage, raw	1 cup	2.8
			Hamburger bun		1	1.2							--- Lima	1/2 cup	8.3	--- boiled	1/2 cup	2.0
			Pancake, plain		1	0.5							Bean sprouts	1/2 cup	1.6	Carrots, boiled	1/2 cup	2.3
			Taco shell		1	0										--- raw	1	2.3
			Coffee cake		1 pc	0.7										Cauliflower	1/2 cup	1.1
			Cupcake		1	0.9										Celery, raw	1 stalk	.1
			Rye Wafers		3	2.3										Corn, drained	1/3 cup	3.1
			Saltines		4	0										--- on the cob	1	5.9
			Vanilla wafers		4	0										--- popped	1 cup	0.4
																Cucumber, raw	1 sm.	0.6
																Eggplant	1/2 cup	2.5
																Green beans	1/2 cup	2.0
																Green pepper	1 ring	0.1
																Lettuce	1/8	0.2
																Mushrooms, raw	1/2 cup	0.9
																Okra	1/2 cup	2.6
																Onions, raw	1/2 cup	0.7
																Peas, boiled	1/2 cup	4.2
																Potato, baked+skin	1 med	3.0
																--- boiled, peeled	1 med	2.7
																--- french fried	10	1.6
																--- mashed w/milk	1/2 cup	0.1
																--- sweet	1/2	2.1
																Rice, white	1/2 cup	0.8
																--- brown	1/2 cup	2.4
																Squash, acorn	1/2 cup	3.5
																--- zucchini	1/2 cup	2.0

Fiber Content of Common Food Items

(showing food, serving size, and grams of fiber)

Recurrence is 5%. Cases related to pregnancy will usually resolve themselves following delivery.

Tips on adding fiber to your diet

Following these simple steps will not only improve your health, but will probably significantly reduce your food costs and your weight!

1. Substitute vegetables fruits and complex carbohydrates (starches) for foods high in fat (such as red meat, fried foods, etc.) and sugar.
2. Eat foods as they come naturally, i.e. brown rice instead of white (which is refined), vegetables and fruit with the peel, whole fruits instead of juices, raw instead of in a box or can, etc.
3. Eat foods (fruits & vegetables) raw (uncooked) as much as possible. Foods contain much more important vitamins & minerals when raw than after cooking.
4. Read product labels before purchasing. Buy foods which are high in fiber, but low in fat & sugar.
5. Introduce fiber slowly to avoid feeling gaseous and bloated. These effects should go away as your system gets used to the fiber.
6. Drink *lots* of water as you increase your fiber: 6-8 glasses per day. Fiber absorbs water!

