



*Excellence in Women's Healthcare*

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## **Hemorrhoids during pregnancy**

Hemorrhoids during pregnancy result from blood vessels in the rectal area or vagina that become overly swollen. Hemorrhoids are simply another form of varicose vein that women are susceptible to during pregnancy. They may be small in size or quite large, itchy or for some even painful. Some women experience rectal bleeding along with hemorrhoid pain. Other women with hemorrhoids might also experience mild varicose veins in the leg calf.

If you experience pain or itching in or around the rectum and bleeding, you may be surprised to find a swollen or inflamed mass of tissue that looks something like a giant blister. This is usually a sign of hemorrhoids.

### **What causes Hemorrhoids:**

Pregnant women are more susceptible to varicose veins in general in part due to the increasing amount of blood circulating in their body during pregnancy and in part due to fluctuating hormonal levels. Increasing levels of progesterone can help soften the walls of veins supporting the pelvic including the inferior vena cava. They can also form from straining too much during a bowel movement. Because pregnant women often experience constipation during pregnancy, hemorrhoids are often problematic and may increase during pregnancy.

### **Treating Hemorrhoids During Pregnancy:**

Fortunately there are many simple and effective strategies for treating hemorrhoids during pregnancy. Here are some easy tips to follow to help relieve the pain and discomfort of hemorrhoids during pregnancy, and tips for preventing hemorrhoids during pregnancy.

- Most importantly you should focus on eating a high fiber diet complemented by plenty of fluids. This will help keep you more regular and reduce the amount of constipation you experience during pregnancy. More often than not hemorrhoids result from constipation. Your best chance for preventing them is to stay as regular as possible during pregnancy. You might even consider drinking a cup of prune juice daily to help promote regular bowel movements.

- If you develop hemorrhoids try a sitz bath. Most drugstores sell the supplies you need for a sitz bath. Basically this is just to minimize the pain associated with hemorrhoids.
- Try using hemorrhoid pads. These contain witch hazel, and are generally safe to use during pregnancy. While there are other hemorrhoid related products on the market, you should check in with your doctor before using them during pregnancy. Some may result in more irritation than when you started. Remember that skin is overly sensitive when pregnant, hence it is best to err on the side of caution.
- Try using an ice pack or other cold compress on the affected area. This can help reduce swelling and help minimize the pain associated with hemorrhoids.
- Try using hemorrhoid pads. These contain witch hazel, and are generally safe to use during pregnancy. While there are other hemorrhoid related products on the market, you should check in with doctor before using them during pregnancy. Some may result in more irritation than when you started. Remember that skin is overly sensitive when pregnant; hence it is best to err on the side of caution.
- Wipe gently when pregnant. This will help reduce irritation and help prevent bleeding from hemorrhoids. You may find pre-moistened feminine cleansers or wipes more useful than toilet paper when dealing with hemorrhoids.

Kegel exercises may also help prevent hemorrhoids during pregnancy. These handy little exercises help promote greater circulation in the rectal and vaginal areas during pregnancy. They can also strengthen the muscle supporting the rectum, further reducing the likelihood that you will develop hemorrhoids. Fortunately most hemorrhoids are easily treated and disappear on their own with proper care and attention.