

# Prevalence, Characteristics, and Dietary management of Haemorrhoids among Adults and its Impact on their Quality of Life

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## Abstract

Haemorrhoids are defined as the symptomatic enlargement and distal displacement of the normal anal cushions. They can be either internal, external, or internoexternal, according to their position in relation to the dentate line. They can cause significant financial burdens and personal discomfort. The study also showed that not eating enough fibre and eating lots of spicy food could increase the risk of Haemorrhoids. However, the typical symptoms of Haemorrhoids include bleeding, pain, skin irritation, faecal leakage, prolapse, mucus secretion, and developing a thrombosed hernia.

**Keyword:** Haemorrhoids, Dietary management, Fibrous Diet, Quality of life

**Ethical clearance** - not applicable

**Conflict of author** – none

## Introduction

**Aetiology:** Hemorrhoids are defined as the symptomatic enlargement and distal displacement of the normal anal cushions. They can be either internal, external, or internoexternal, according to their position in relation to the dentate line. They can cause significant financial burdens and personal discomfort<sup>1</sup>. However, the typical symptoms of hemorrhoids include bleeding, pain, skin irritation, faecal leakage, prolapse, mucus secretion, and developing a thrombosed hernial. According to Goligher's classification, they are classified into four grades with grade I meaning non-prolapsing hemorrhoids; grade II: prolapsing hemorrhoids on straining but reduce spontaneously; grade III: prolapsing hemorrhoids requiring manual reduction, and grade IV: non-reducible prolapsing hemorrhoids, which include acutely thrombosed, incarcerated hemorrhoids<sup>[2]</sup>. They can cause significant financial burdens and personal discomfort. Hemorrhoids are the third most common gastrointestinal disease.

They are one of the most common reasons why people go to the doctor or the hospital. Every year, about four million people visit the doctor or the hospital because of hemorrhoids. While researchers do not completely agree on the pathophysiology of hemorrhoids, there are several theories that aim to explain their underlying causes. These theories propose that hemorrhoids could be associated with diseases that impact the veins

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in the anorectal vascular cushions, a weakening of the collagen support in the anal canal, or an elevation in arterial flow to the vascular plexus<sup>3</sup>

**Objectives:** To study about Haemorrhoids.

To Identify Dietary Management Strategies.

**Prevalence:** Most of the theory that is widely accepted suggests that constipation leads to continuous pressure and the formation of hardened stools, resulting in the deterioration of tissue in the anal canal and displacement of the anal cushions. According to the National Centre for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), haemorrhoids have a global prevalence of 4.4%. Nevertheless, the Association of Colon & Rectal Surgeons of India predicts that half of the population will experience haemorrhoids at some stage in their lives, with approximately 5% of the population having them at any given moment. According to Frontiers, therapeutic treatment for haemorrhoids includes diet. According to Dr. Betsy F. Clemens, low-fiber foods like dairy and meat can cause or worsen constipation, which can lead to haemorrhoids. Haemorrhoids are a condition that mostly affects people who are younger than 40 years old. This report says that less than 40% of the people with haemorrhoids were vegetarians, and more than half of the mate a variety of different foods.

The study also showed that not eating enough fiber and eating lots of spicy food could increase the risk of hemorrhoids. Eating more fiber can help prevent hemorrhoids because it helps with constipation, which is a risk factor this study also found that straining during bowel movements can lead to complications like bleeding and a mass coming out of the rectum, which was also seen in this study.

Hemorrhoids can be painful, especially during activities such as sitting, standing, or bowel movements. The pain can range from mild discomfort to severe pain, affecting daily activities and overall well-being. Itching and irritation are common symptoms of hemorrhoids, causing personal discomfort and reduced quality of life. This ongoing discomfort can be painful. Bleeding is a common symptom of hemorrhoids and, although usually not serious, can cause anxiety and worry. It can make normal bowel movements difficult, causing straining and additional discomfort. The pain and discomfort associated with hemorrhoids can interfere with daily activities such as work, exercise, and socializing, making it difficult to concentrate or enjoy leisure activities. Chronic hemorrhoids can have psychological effects, causing stress, anxiety, and even depression due to ongoing symptoms of discomfort and worry. The pain and discomfort caused by hemorrhoids can disrupt sleep, lead to fatigue and reduced quality of life. Hemorrhoids can make it difficult to maintain proper anal hygiene, leading to increased discomfort and self-consciousness.

**Dietary management:** These patients should be recommended to follow a dietary modification involving increased fibre intake with adequate fluid as a first-line treatment. Diet has a powerful yet complex effects on health. It maintains the homeostasis in the body if taken in good proportion during normal life cycle and modification is required during diseased condition. Foods provide energy needed to keep the body breathing and alive, for movement and warmth, and for growth and repair of tissues. A healthy diet provides the body with nutrition such as fluid adequate essential amino acid they get from protein, essential fatty acids, vitamin, minerals and proper carbohydrate (calories). A healthy diet support energy needs and provides nutrition without exposure to toxicity or excessive weight gain from consuming excessive amount. Charaka says in praise of food “the life of all living things is food and all the world seeks food. Complexion, clarity, good voice, long life, understanding, happiness, satisfaction, growth, strength and intelligence are all established in food. It is believed that a diet that is low in fiber and high in processed foods and refined carbohydrates can contribute to the development of haemorrhoids. A lack of dietary fiber can lead to chronic constipation, which is a common risk factor for haemorrhoids. Fiber adds bulk to the stool and helps it pass more easily through the digestive system. Without enough fiber, the stool can become hard and difficult to pass, leading to straining during bowel movements. This straining increases the pressure on the rectal veins and can contribute to the formation of haemorrhoids. Additionally, a diet high in processed foods and refined carbohydrates can contribute to obesity and weight gain. Increased body weight can put added pressure on the veins in the rectal area, contributing to the development of haemorrhoids. diet that is rich in fiber can help prevent haemorrhoids and alleviate symptoms. Adequate fiber intake promotes regular bowel movements and helps soften the stool, reducing the need for straining. Foods that are high in fiber include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts. The two different types of fiber, both of which can help with hemorrhoids, which are helps in this disease:

**Soluble fiber:** Soluble fiber attracts water and turns to gel, which slows digestion. It is found in oat bran, barley, nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, peas, and some fruits and vegetables, as well as in psyllium (a common fiber supplement).

**Insoluble fiber:** Insoluble fiber adds bulk to stool, and it may help food pass more quickly through the digestive system. It's found in wheat bran, vegetables, and whole grains.

### **Ayurvedic reviews of Haemorrhoids**

Acharya Sushruta, the Father of Indian surgery, had a deep understanding of this subject. He directed to treat Vatarsha with Snehana, Swedana, Vamana, Virechana, Asthapana and Anuvasana Basti. As usual Pittarsha should be treated with Virechana whereas Shamana therapy is the best way to tackle with Raktrashas. Kapharsha could be managed with Ahardravya mixed with Shunthi and Kulattha. The Sannipatika Arsha

should be subjected to the mixed treatment of all Dosha. Many treatment modalities like Abhyanga, Swedana, Dhupana, Avagaha, Lepana, Raktamokshana, Deepana and Pachana are employed as a part of Arsha treatment. It recommends a diet containing barley, wheat, rice, green leafy vegetables, and legumes, as they are soothing and easy to digest. It advises avoiding heavy and fatty foods, excessively cold or hot foods, and the use of dietary herbs like Triphala to improve digestion and regulate bowel movements.

The Charaka Samhita, a foundational Ayurvedic text, emphasizes the importance of diet in maintaining health and treating diseases. It recommends consuming easy-to-digest foods, including cooling and astringent foods, to reduce inflammation and promote healing. Dietary fiber is crucial for preventing and alleviating constipation, a common trigger for hemorrhoids. Adequate hydration with lukewarm water is also recommended. Hot, spicy, and pungent foods can worsen the condition<sup>10</sup>.

The Ashtanga Hridaya, a comprehensive text that combines Charaka and Sushruta's knowledge, emphasizes a fiber-rich diet, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and advises against excessive meat, alcohol, and spicy foods. Triphala is also highlighted as a valuable herbal remedy for promoting regular and comfortable bowel movements.

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