

DON'T BE AFRAID OF A HAEMORRHOID OPERATION

Haemorrhoids are varicose pouches in the venous network under the anal mucous membrane. There are four degrees of severity.

They often cause itching, pain or bleeding immediately after bowel movements.

Although only usually discussed in whispers by sufferers, the subject of haemorrhoids is also usually accompanied by horror stories about the torments and pain involved in an operation.

The reason is that practically all the conventional surgical methods result in a defect in the mucous membrane in the sensitive area of the anus. In anticipation of burning pain, the sufferer often suppresses bowel movements which leads in turn to constipation and even more stretching of the sphincter and sore area at the next bowel movement.

In "Doppler-guided haemorrhoidal artery ligation" (HAL) all of the arteries leading to the haemorrhoids are tied off. Because the blood flow to the haemorrhoids is cut off they shrink.

The surgical rectoscope with its rounded end has a narrow side opening of a defined length for about a quarter of the circumference and in front of that is the Doppler probe.

It is inserted into the rectum and given small circular turns so that each of the haemorrhoidal arteries is found and tied off via the side slit using absorbable suture fitted on a needle.

Following this painless procedure the patient is able to walk immediately; there is no need for sick leave.

Before the procedure a colonoscopy should certainly be carried out to exclude other reasons for bleeding or development of haemorrhoids.

The HAL procedure itself is carried out without anaesthetic, though with sedation (a state of semi-consciousness) if requested.

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