

Piles

The name “**piles**” is derived from the Latin “**pila**” for ball. An **appropriate** description for haemorrhoids, blood vessels in the anal-rectal area that cause pain when they become swollen. Other symptoms include: **itchiness**, painless bleeding and **leakage** of faeces.

One cause of haemorrhoids is **straining** when passing stool which may damage the rather **delicate** surface of an internal haemorrhoid. Straining may also cause an internal haemorrhoid to get pushed through the anal opening. This is known as a **prolapsed** or **protruding** haemorrhoid. External haemorrhoids are found under the skin around the anus. When irritated they may itch or bleed. Blood may also collect in an external haemorrhoid and form a **clot** known as a thrombus, which may result in **severe** pain, swelling and **inflammation**. As with a lot of things, prevention is better than cure ...

Pharmacy customer: Hello, do you speak English?

PTA: Hello. Yes, I do. What can I do for you?

Yes, well...mmm, could we talk somewhere less public?

Certainly, we have this little office here to my right just for this **purpose!** Please follow me.

Thank goodness. My problem is a little embarrassing.

Oh, I hope it's not too serious.

I'm afraid that I have piles.

Piles? I'm sorry, my English is good, but not that good I'm afraid.

Haemorrhoids!

Okay! How long have you had the symptoms?

I've had them for about a week or so. First I thought it was from eating spicy food or drinking orange juice.

Before I can give you anything, I need to ask one or two questions. Are you okay with that?

No problem, go ahead.

You said that your **bottom** was irritated. Did you mean red and itchy?

It's unbelievably itchy.

Was there any blood when you went to the toilet?

Yes, but only a little.

And the blood wasn't dark or anything?

No, it was bright red and not a lot but enough to make me come to you.

Was this the first time that you have had haemorrhoids?

Yes.

Do you have problems with **constipation**?

Yes, in fact I often get constipation. I probably don't drink enough.

Constipation is not only caused by not drinking enough, lack of **fibre** in your diet is one cause, and not going to the toilet when you get the **urge** is another one. Are you taking any codeine at the moment?

Not now, but I was at home recently and got a terrible cough, I probably caught it on the plane. My old family doctor prescribed a cough linctus with codeine.

Codeine is known to cause constipation, you know?

I didn't know that! What do you recommend I do now?

We have this **ointment** with lidocaine, which is a topical anaesthetic that will help you until you go to see a doctor. There should be some improvement in two to three days. If not please go to your doctor in the next days!

A doctor. Why?

He or she will give you a referral for a proctologist, to make sure that it is “only” haemorrhoids and not something else.

I will. Thank you. Good bye.

Bye, bye. ■

*Catherine Croghan,
Lecturer in English and native speaker*

VOCABULARY

piles	Hämorrhiden
derived	abgeleitet
appropriate	zutreffend
itchiness	Juckreiz
leakage	Auslaufen
straining	drücken (bei Stuhlentleerung)
delicate	empfindlich
prolapsed	vorgefallen
protruding	vorragend
clot	Blutgerinnsel, Blutpfropf
severe	heftig
inflammation	Entzündung
embarrassing	peinlich
spicy food	stark gewürztes Essen
bottom	Hintern, Po
bright red	hellrot
constipation	Obstipation, Verstopfung
fibre	Ballaststoff
urge	Drang
cough linctus	Hustensaft
ointment	Salbe
referral	(ärztliche) Überweisung