

Radiofrequency Ablation - Rafaelo Procedure

What Does The Procedure Involve?

The operation is usually performed under a local anaesthetic, a general anaesthetic or with sedation. An enema to clear the lower part of the bowel is not usually necessary.

The surgeon will insert a short telescope, known as a proctoscope, into your back passage. This will allow them to see the haemorrhoids. Some local anaesthetic is injected underneath the haemorrhoid. You may feel some minor discomfort at this point if the procedure is being carried out purely under local anaesthetic or with sedation.

The surgeon then uses a special pointed probe to pierce the haemorrhoid. The radiofrequency ablation is then applied to the haemorrhoid. The surgeon may treat more than one pile during the treatment. If the haemorrhoids are very extensive you may be asked to return for a further treatment. External skin tags, if present, are not routinely removed but many do shrink in size after the procedure.

Are There Any Risks?

There are small risks associated with any operation. Pre-operative assessments are made of any heart or lung conditions, as well as any coexisting medical condition. During the hospital admission patients wear stockings to prevent thrombosis (blood clots).

Bleeding can occur after any haemorrhoid surgery; you will probably notice small amounts of blood, particularly when you open your bowels. Usually this is a small amount but rarely it can be quite a lot. If that occurs, you must seek medical advice.

Infection is very rare; if you develop increasing pain, fevers or flu-like symptoms you should seek medical advice.

What Happens After The Operation?

You may feel uncomfortable after the operation, but this is far less than experienced by patients undergoing haemorrhoidectomy. You will have some local anaesthetic injected into the area; this will numb the pain for a few hours. The commonest feeling patients describe is a feeling of "being kicked in the bottom".

If the surgeon has placed a dressing pack in the anus this will be removed before your discharge.

You are allowed to eat and drink as soon as you feel able.

You will be able to go home on the same day as the procedure.

You will be given painkillers to take by mouth; you should take these regularly to prevent pain coming on.

It may be a little uncomfortable when you first open your bowels after the operation, it is important that you do not avoid going to the lavatory. Any discomfort will get better. Patients are given a regular stool softener to

take for 4-6 weeks and are advised to avoid straining.

For further information see our advice sheet Caring for Yourself after Anal Surgery.

You will be encouraged to keep mobile after the procedure. You can normally return to normal activities including work and driving after about 48 hours, but this may vary. You should avoid heavy lifting or increased physical activities for about 4-6 weeks.

You will normally be reviewed in clinic around 6 weeks after the operation but you can be seen sooner if there are problems.