Haemorrhoids are a painful condition that can cause distress and discomfort to the sufferer. If left untreated, haemorrhoids can develop into a more complex issue which, in extreme cases, may result in treatment with sclerotherapy or cryosurgery. However, mild cases of haemorrhoids can be controlled by a combination of diet, regular toilet habits, and essential oils to control some of the more painful and irritating symptoms.

**Overview of haemorrhoids**

Haemorrhoids develop on the veins in the lining of the anus and the junction of the rectum due to sustained pressure; sustained pressure can be the result of chronic constipation and straining repeatedly to pass hard faeces. Haemorrhoids are also a common condition associated with pregnancy and recent childbirth when pressure has been increased for a period of time in the pelvic region. Some people are prone to haemorrhoids during periods of stress due to the associated constipation issues triggered by the stressful situation.

Haemorrhoids restrict the normal circulation of blood to the rectum. They can result in rectal bleeding and discomfort when passing faeces. If the haemorrhoids are prolapsed itching, redness and a mucous discharge around the anus may develop too. Prolapsed haemorrhoids may lead to thrombosis which causes extreme pain for the patient. Another complication of haemorrhoids is the development of anemia as a result of blood loss caused by rectal bleeding.

The aim of the treatment of haemorrhoids is to reduce symptoms such as swelling, pain, and itching.

Maintaining regular toilet habits can help keep the symptoms at bay once the initial problem has been addressed.

More serious cases of haemorrhoids may need to be treated with methods such as sclerotherapy, cryosurgery or even a haemorrhoidectomy in which the haemorrhoids are surgically removed. In such cases, professional medical advice should be sought.

**Case study**

**Client history**

The client is a healthy woman in her 40s with a balanced diet of fruit, vegetables, and meat. She had no major health issues but had been going through a period of stress in her life. As a consequence of this stress and the pattern in her health history during previous bouts of stress, constipation became a problem. This resulted in the formation of haemorrhoids. She was familiar with the use of essential oils in aromatherapy practice and sought help with relief from the itching and pain of her haemorrhoids.
Aromatic treatment
In January 2012, a selection of essential oils were blended together in an unscented white lotion base to be applied externally to the affected area of the anus. The rationale for choosing the specific essential oils was as follows:

- Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*) – high in monoterpenes such as pinene, camphene and limonene, noted for stimulating and phlebotonic properties (Price and Price, 2002; Caddy, 1997); Cypress is recommended by several sources as proving effective for the relief of the symptoms associated with haemorrhoids (Caddy, 1997; Davis, 1999).

- Frankincense (*Boswellia carteri*)* – high in monoterpenes such as pinene, thujene and limonene; noted for anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties (Price and Price, 2002).

- Juniper (*Juniperus communis*) – high in monoterpenes such as pinene and limonene; noted for analgesic and antiseptic properties (Caddy, 1997; Price, 2000).

An unscented white lotion base was chosen for the area of application as it was easy to administer, gentle to use and wasn’t slippery like an oil base.

Formula
2 oz (60ml) unscented white lotion base
4 drops Cypress (*Cupressus sempervirens*)
6 drops Frankincense (*Boswellia carteri*)
8 drops Juniper (*Juniperus communis*)

The blend was applied twice daily, once in the morning (after going to the toilet) and once at night prior to going to bed. Client was reminded to wash hands each time the blend was applied. To avoid bacterial contamination, it was recommended that unwashed hand(s) not be dipped into the lotion. The blend was used for 10 days. It is also important to note that this blend was for the external application onto the haemorrhoids located outside the anus.

Observations and outcome
By day four, improvements were noted in the swelling and pain surrounding the area of the haemorrhoids. Although daily bowel movements had still not commenced, the itching had reduced. After several more days and several bowel movements, the pain surrounding the area had reduced significantly. By the end of week two, normal bowel movements were in place once again and the haemorrhoids appearance and size were reduced.

Evaluation
During the period of application of the essential oil blend, the client obtained relief from the itching and pain caused by the haemorrhoids. Due to the site of the problem, the blend was initially difficult and uncomfortable to administer. The application was easier as time progressed and the pain and inflammation were reduced.

References


*Boswellia carteri* is considered to be an endangered plant species. You can use *Boswellia serrata* as a substitute because it is a faster growing, larger tree than *Boswellia carteri*.

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