

## **The Rafaelo Procedure**

The Rafaelo procedure is an innovative surgical treatment for haemorrhoids, recently approved by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE). It is designed to cure haemorrhoids in a minimally invasive way, with no cuts made into the tissues. The Rafaelo procedure uses well established radio frequency technology, allowing patients to walk in and walk out, with minimal post-operative pain, if any at all, and immediately return to normal daily activities. Its effect is to reduce the size of the haemorrhoid and eliminate the symptoms.

The Rafaelo Procedure can be used effectively on all grades of internal haemorrhoids. It is generally carried out under local anaesthetic. The area around the haemorrhoid is anaesthetised to avoid any discomfort. Radio frequency energy is then applied to the haemorrhoid, reducing the blood flow to it, causing it to shrink and eventually disappear. Often this only takes one 15 minute treatment session and requires minimal after-care. Symptoms should improve almost immediately.

## **Benefits Of The Rafaelo Procedure**

The main benefits are the relief of pain, bleeding, discharge, discomfort and itching caused by haemorrhoids.

## **What Are The Risks Associated With The Rafaelo Procedure?**

All treatments and procedures have risks.

The risks post-procedure and during the following 2 weeks include:

- Discomfort
- Mild bleeding or spotting
- Anal discharge

Other rarer complications post-procedure include:

- Recurrence of symptoms
- Infection
- Ulceration
- Anal fissure

## **Are There Any Alternatives?**

Other procedures include rubber band ligation, injection sclerotherapy, the THD procedure (haemorrhoidal artery ligation), stapled haemorrhoidectomy or formal haemorrhoidectomy (see information on haemorrhoids). These options will be discussed with you before any surgery is scheduled.

Enquiries: 07500870587 or 01519295181

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## **What Would Happen If My Haemorrhoids Were Left Untreated?**

Untreated haemorrhoids can drop down outside the anal canal and strangulate (having their blood supply cut off), causing pain and becoming infected. Haemorrhoids can also cause leakage of mucus, inflammation and irritation of the skin around the anus. Untreated haemorrhoids can also bleed, so you could become anaemic.

## **Will The Haemorrhoids Return After Surgery?**

Haemorrhoids can return after any form of treatment; recurrence rates after the Rafaelo procedure are generally less than 10%. If they do return a haemorrhoidectomy or other forms of treatment may be necessary.

## **How Long Will I Be In Hospital?**

As this is a day case procedure you will be expected to go home on the day of your surgery.

## **Before The Operation**

Prior to admission you will need to have a pre-operative assessment. This is an assessment of your health to make sure you are fully prepared for your treatment and discharge. The pre-operative assessment nurses will help you with any worries or concerns that you have and will give you advice on any preparation needed for your surgery.

If you are undergoing sedation you will be given specific instructions about when to stop eating and drinking; please follow these carefully, otherwise this may pose a sedation risk and may mean we will have to cancel your surgery. You should bath or shower before coming to hospital.

On admission a member of the nursing staff will welcome you. The nurses will look after you and answer any questions you may have. You will be asked to change into a theatre gown. Prior to surgery you may need to have an enema (a liquid medication given into the back passage to empty the bowel)

The surgeon will visit you and answer any questions that you have.

A nurse will go with you to the procedures room and stay with you until the sedation is commenced. A plastic cannula will be inserted into a vein and a clip attached to your finger. This will allow us to administer the sedative and to check your heart rate and oxygen levels during the operation.

## **After The Operation**

You will normally be able to start drinking shortly after the procedure, and can start eating as soon as you are hungry. You will normally be able to get out of bed immediately after surgery.

Some pain is to be expected, but it is rarely significant. The nurses will give you painkillers and monitor your pain. If a dissolvable anal plug has been used this will be passed on your first bowel movement. A small amount of bleeding from the back passage is also to be expected. The nurses will monitor the wound site and if necessary provide pads to protect your clothes from marking.

If your operation is planned as a day case you can go home as soon as the effect of the sedatives has worn off. Sedation can temporarily affect your coordination and reasoning skills, so you will need a responsible adult to take you home and stay with you for the first 24 hours. During this time it is also important that you do not operate machinery, drive or make important decisions. Before your discharge the nurse will advise you about your post-operative care and will give you a supply of painkillers and laxatives. Your GP will be notified of your treatment.

If a hospital follow-up appointment is required you will be notified of this prior to discharge and an appointment card given to you.

## **What Activities Will I Be Able To Do After My Surgery?**

You can return to normal physical and sexual activities when you feel comfortable; this normally takes 1-7 days.

## **How Much Pain Can I Expect?**

It is common to experience a degree of pain after the Rafaelo procedure, although many patients report no pain as such. The pain can be made worse by avoiding opening your bowels or constipation. We will provide several painkilling medications, and laxatives to help soften your bowel motions. Warm baths may also help reduce the discomfort. You may experience discomfort for up to two days after the procedure.

## **Bowel Action And Personal Hygiene**

It is important to maintain a regular bowel movement that should be well formed but soft. Continue to take laxatives for one week after your surgery. Eating a high fibre diet and increasing your fluid intake will also help. You may notice minimal blood loss after each bowel movement, but this will gradually reduce over the next few days.

It is important to keep the operation site clean. If possible, wash after each bowel action for one week after the operation. Bathing once or twice a day is also soothing and may reduce discomfort.

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## **Driving**

You must not drive for at least 24 hours after surgery. Before driving you should ensure that you are able to perform an emergency stop, have the strength and capability to control the car, and be able to respond quickly to any situation that may occur.

## **Return To Work**

You can return to work as soon as you feel well enough. This could depend on type of work that you do. Typically you will be able to resume work within a couple of days after the procedure.

## **When To Contact Your Surgeon**

In the period following your operation you should contact us on 07968228832 or your GP if you notice any of the following problems:

- increasing pain, redness, swelling or discharge from the back passage
- severe bleeding
- constipation for more than three days despite using a laxative
- difficulty in passing urine
- high temperature over 38°C or chills
- persistent nausea or vomiting.

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