

How to Give Your Child a Saline Enema

A saline enema is used to rinse stool from the colon. It is used to treat constipation or to prepare for certain tests.

Helpful Hints

- Distract your child before and after giving the enema. Read, play music, video games or rub their back.
- It is normal for parents to be anxious when they have to give their child an enema which then can make the child feel anxious. Just try to stay calm.
- Explain that you are giving the enema to make them feel better. Show them the tip and allow them to touch it. Rub the tip against their arm to show what it will feel like when you insert it.
- Decide on a place that works best for your child. Some prefer the floor of the bathroom because the toilet is right there. Others prefer the living room or bedroom. You may wish to protect the floor with some towels.

How to Make Saline Solution

Mix one teaspoon of table salt in 2 cups of lukewarm tap water. Stir well until the salt is dissolved.

How to Give

1. Wash your hands.
2. The fluid should be at body temperature. Run the bottle under warm water to warm it up. Do not microwave.
3. Clamp the tubing that connects to the enema bag.
4. Measure _____ ml of saline solution and put it in the bag.
5. Keep the enema tip lower than the bag. Unclamp the tubing. The saline solution will go through the tubing. When the solution comes out of the tip, clamp the tubing. It is okay if some air stays in the tubing.
6. Tell your child what you are going to do.
7. Have your child lay on their left side with knees tucked up to their chest. If your child is more comfortable bending only the right knee to their chest, and keeping the left leg straight, that is okay.
8. Put a little lubricant on the tip of the tubing. You can use KY[®] jelly or Surgilube. **Do not use Vaseline[®].**
9. Gently put the tip into your child's rectum. Put it in about 1 ½ to 3 inches, depending on the size of your child.
10. Unclamp the tube.
11. Raise the bag up a little so the fluid will go into the rectum. Do not raise the bag more than 18 inches above your child. If the fluid leaks out their rectum, clamp the tubing for a minute, then reopen. If there is still some leaking, lower the bag a little so the fluid goes in slower. You may need to squeeze their buttocks together to prevent leaking. **(Raising the bag makes the fluid go in faster. Lowering the bag makes the fluid go in slower).**
12. If your child has cramps or pain, clamp the tubing for a minute. Open the clamp again when the cramping stops. If the cramping continues, lower the bag so the fluid goes slower.
13. When the bag is empty, clamp the tubing and remove it from your child's rectum.

14. Have your child hold the fluid in for 15 minutes. Have them stay on their left side. It helps to distract your child. If your child feels the urge to pass the stool before the desired time, have them take deep breaths in and out, as if they were blowing out candles. This will help them relax and lessen the urge to go.
15. You may need to hold their buttocks together.
16. After 15 minutes, have your child sit on the toilet to let the fluid and stool out.

If you have questions or concerns call your clinic.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint-Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 4/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7611