Colostomy Irrigation

People who have a Colostomy will learn irrigation techniques. This will allow you to have more control over the timing of bowel movements.

For children and people who have loop colostomies, talk with an ostomy nurse **and** the surgeon before starting.

Colostomy Irrigation
Colostomy irrigation is a daily or every other day procedure. It involves instilling tap water into the large intestine. The goal is to be "stool free" in between irrigations. For it to work well, it is best to perform it at the same time each day or every other day. You will need about 1 hour a day to complete this.

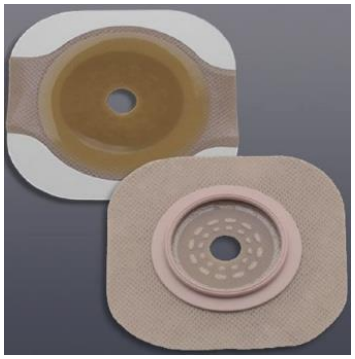
You may **not** be a candidate for colostomy irrigation if you:

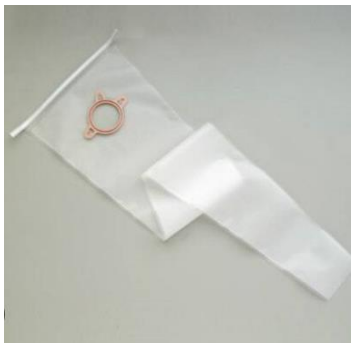
- Recently started chemotherapy.
- Are being treated for heart failure or kidney disease.
- Have a history of stomal problems such as parastomal hernia, stomal prolapse or stomal stenosis.
- Have active bowel disease such as Crohn's.
- Are receiving pelvic/abdominal radiation therapy.

How to Irrigate

1. Gather your supplies.

2. Remove current cover or pouch. Place barrier over stoma and attach irrigation sleeve to barrier.





3. Fill irrigation bag with about 500-1000 ml of lukewarm tap water. Prime tubing to expel air bubbles.



4. Lubricate stoma cone with lubricating jelly.

5. Open top of irrigation sleeve and insert cone into stoma.

6. Open regulator on irrigation bag. Let water slowly run into stoma over about 10-15 minutes. You may need to adjust the cone to let water run in at a constant flow.

7. Once water has finished infusing or once you feel full, clamp the tubing. Hold the cone in place for about a minute. Then remove the cone and seal top of bag. Wash cone with warm soapy water. Rinse and lay flat to dry for reuse.

8. Most of the water is released in the first 5-10 minutes. Sip on coffee or small amounts of water and wait about 45 minutes to one hour.

9. Once you have finished stooling, remove sleeve. Replace ostomy pouch with ostomy cap or mini pouch. Change the barrier if needed.

10. Complete irrigation once daily around the same time for best results.

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 © 5/2025 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#8413.