

How to Give Your Child an Enema

A rectal enema is one way to treat constipation.

Helpful Hints

The enema should be at room temp. Distract your child before and after giving the enema. You can try reading, playing music, or rubbing his back. Video games can help distract your child. You may feel anxious if you have to give your child an enema. Keep in mind it is medicine that your child needs in order to feel better. After the first time, you will see how easy it is to do. Explain to your child that you are giving the enema to make him feel better. Rub the covered tip against his arm to show what the tip of the enema will feel like when you insert it.

The Enema You Use Is Based on Your Child's Age

- Children 2 to 4 years, use one-half (1/2) of a child size enema.
- Children 5 to 10 years, use one bottle of a child size enema.
- Children 11 to 19 years, use one bottle of an adult enema.

How to Insert a Rectal Enema

1. Wash your hands.
2. Remove the enema from the box. Take the cover off the tip. The tip is lubricated making it easier to insert.
3. Positions your child can try are:
 - Lying on the left side with knees bent toward the chest.
 - On the back with legs raised as if to change a diaper.

- On the stomach with knees to chest or over your lap.

4. Hold the bottle in one hand. With your other hand separate the buttock cheeks until you can see the anal opening.
5. Ask your child to bear down, as if he were having a bowel movement, to make insertion easier. With steady pressure, gently insert the tip of the bottle into the anal opening. **Do not force the tip of the bottle into the anal opening.** Squeeze the bottle until the correct amount is nearly gone. You will know if you placed it far enough if the enema does not come right back out.
6. Keep your child in position. Hold your child's buttock cheeks together to keep him from pushing out the enema. Do this for 15 to 20 minutes. If your child feels the urge to pass the stool before the desired time, have him take deep breaths in and out, as though he were blowing out birthday candles. This will help him relax and lessen the urge to pass the stool.

If you are not sure where to insert the enema, ask your health care provider. You may also want to refer to the package insert that comes with the enema. Pictures are often in this handout.

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 ©9/2019. University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5960.