

How to Give Your Child a Rectal Suppository

Medicines come in several forms. A rectal suppository is one way to give medicine if the medicine cannot or will not be taken by mouth.

Helpful Hints

- If the suppository is too soft to insert, chill it in the fridge for 30 minutes or run it under cold water before taking off the wrapper.
- Calm and distract your child before and after giving it. Try reading, playing music, or taking deep breaths.
- Some parents may become anxious when they have to give a suppository. Keep in mind it is medicine that your child needs. Once you have given it the first time, you will see how easy it is to do.

How to Insert

1. Wash your hands.
2. Remove the foil wrapper and wet with a few drops of cold water or a water-soluble lubricant, such as K-Y Jelly®. **Do not** use Vaseline® since this keeps it from melting.
3. Put on plastic gloves or cover your fingertip with plastic wrap, such as Saran Wrap®.

4. Place your child:
 - On either side with the knees bent toward the chest.
 - On back with legs raised as if to change a diaper.
 - On stomach with knees to chest or over your lap.
5. Hold the suppository between your thumb and index finger.
6. With your other hand, open the buttock cheeks until you can see the anal opening.
7. Gently insert the round end into the anal opening using the tip of your index finger. You will know if you have inserted it far enough if it does not come right back out.
8. Gently hold the buttock cheeks closed to keep your child from pushing it out. Do this for about 10 minutes.
9. Body heat causes the suppository to melt and begin to take effect.

Who to Call

If you have questions about giving a suppository to your child, please call your health care provider.

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 © 9/2023 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#5595