

An information and instruction leaflet on how to use the enema at home

Endoscopy Department



Patient information leaflet

Please read the whole of this leaflet before you use the enema.

What is in this pack?

In your enema pack you will find:

- A packaged enema 'pouch' with a thin tube attached
- A small white plastic clip with the enema (which is not required for this test and can be disposed of)
- A manufacturer's patient information leaflet

Why have I been given this pack?

You have been given an appointment to have a flexible sigmoidoscopy. This is an examination of your bowel, where a flexible tube with a camera at the end is passed through your back passage (rectum) and up inside your bowel by a specially trained doctor or nurse.

You should have received the leaflet, 'Having a flexible sigmoidoscopy' which explains the test in more detail. If you have not received a copy of this, please ask us for one.

This leaflet explains how to use a phosphate enema to prepare for your examination. Please read this leaflet carefully. If there is anything you do not understand or if you change your mind and would like to have this preparation at the hospital instead, please contact one of the nurses in the endoscopy unit. Contact details are at the end of the leaflet.

What is a phosphate enema?

An enema is fluid that is placed in your rectum to clear your bowel. The phosphate enema you have been given is a single-dose disposable enema that will clear out and clean the section of your bowel that will be examined during the test. You need to use this enema before you come for your examination, to make sure your endoscopist (the doctor or specialist nurse who will carry out your test) is able to see the walls of your bowel clearly. Speak to a doctor or nurse in the unit before you use the enema if:

- you know that you have an inflammatory or ulcerative bowel condition
- your doctor has asked you to reduce your sodium (salt) intake

How do I use a phosphate enema?

The phosphate enema should only be given via your rectum (bottom). You will need to use the enema at least one hour before leaving home on the day of your examination.

1. Have a plastic bag ready to dispose of the enema after use.
Peel the outer plastic packaging open to remove the enema pouch.
2. You can use a little Vaseline or cooking oil to lubricate the thin tube if you wish.
3. Lie down close to the toilet e.g. in a nearby bedroom. Lie on your left side if possible. You may like to lie on a towel. Draw your knees up towards your chest.
4. Break off the very thin tip of the blue nozzle. Make sure the nozzle is left with a smooth end.
5. Gently insert the nozzle and thin tube into your bottom (anus). Insert as much of the tube as you comfortably can.
6. Use gentle pressure to squeeze the liquid into your bottom. Stop squeezing if you feel any resistance. You might not empty the whole pouch.
7. Keep a firm hold of the used pouch as you pull the nozzle and tube from your bottom. Put the used enema in the plastic bag for disposal.
8. Stay lying down, and try to hold the liquid inside you for as long as you can before going to the toilet (5-10 minutes)
9. If your lower bowel is empty when you use the enema, you may not have a bowel movement. You may just pass the enema liquid. Don't worry if this happens to you – the enema has still worked. You can dispose of the used enema in your normal household waste.

If you do not have any bowel movements within an hour or if any significant bleeding occurs, contact the endoscopy unit for further advice.

References

- <https://www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/resources/patient-information/gi/using-a-phosphate-enema.pdf>

Contact details

If you require further information or advice, please feel free to contact us.

Endoscopy Unit

Telephone: 01483 571122 **ext** 4409 (8am–6pm, Monday to Friday)

During out of hours, advice can be obtained from your local accident and emergency department or GP. Calls will be dealt with in confidence. Please do not feel embarrassed to ask for information or advice.

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Author: Caroline Smith

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