How to Give Your Child a Saline Enema

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

Helpful Hints

- The fluid should be body temperature before you give it. Do not warm the fluid in the microwave. You can run the bottle of fluid under warm water to warm it up.
- Distract your child before and after giving the enema. You can try reading to him, playing music, or rubbing his back. Video games can help keep your child distracted.
- Some parents may be anxious when they have to give an enema. This is a normal feeling. If you are feeling anxious about giving the enema, this may make your child feel more anxious. Use a calm, neutral approach when giving the enema. Keep in mind it is medicine that your child needs.
- Explain to your child that you are giving the enema to make him feel better. Show him the tip and allow him to touch it. Rub the tip against his arm to show what the tip of the enema will feel like when you insert it.
- Find a comfortable place to do the enema. Some parents prefer the bathroom floor because the toilet is right there. Others prefer to do this in the living room or bedroom. You may wish to protect the floor with some towels.

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1. Wash your hands.
2. Check to be sure the temperature of the enema is about body temperature.
3. Clamp the tubing that is connected to the enema bag.
4. Measure ________ ml of saline solution and put it in the enema bag.
5. Keep the enema tip lower than the enema 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 his left side with his knees tucked up to his chest. If your child is more comfortable bending only his right knee to his chest, and keeping his 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 enema 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 his rectum, clamp the tubing for a minute, then open the clamp again. If there is still some leaking, lower the bag a little so the fluid goes in slower. You may need to squeeze his 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 enema in for 15 minutes. Have him stay on his left side. Distraction is usually needed at this time to help him hold the enema in. 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.

15. You may need to hold his buttocks together if it is hard for him to hold the enema in.

16. After 15 minutes, have your child sit on the toilet to let the enema out.

If you have questions, call your clinic (608) ________________________.