

## What if I am breast feeding?

If you are breastfeeding it is advised that breast milk is expressed and discarded for at least 24 hours after having the enema, as the ingredients contained in the enema may pass into the breast milk. Please contact the department if you would like further advice.

## Questions and queries

If you have any questions regarding the information or instructions in this leaflet, please call the department:

- To cancel or change an appointment call our administrative team on 01225 821412.
- To discuss your appointment or ask questions about the preparation and medications call the nursing team on 01225 821425 or 01225 821788.
- If you have a colostomy or ileostomy, please contact the endoscopy nursing team on 01225 821425 or 01225 821788 for advice.
- You can also ask the nursing team on 01225 821425 or 01225 821788 if you have difficulty at the time of self-administering the enema.

If you are unable to give yourself the enema, we are happy to make arrangements to give the enema in the endoscopy department with advanced notice; contact the endoscopy department on 01225 821412 to make arrangements with our administrative team.

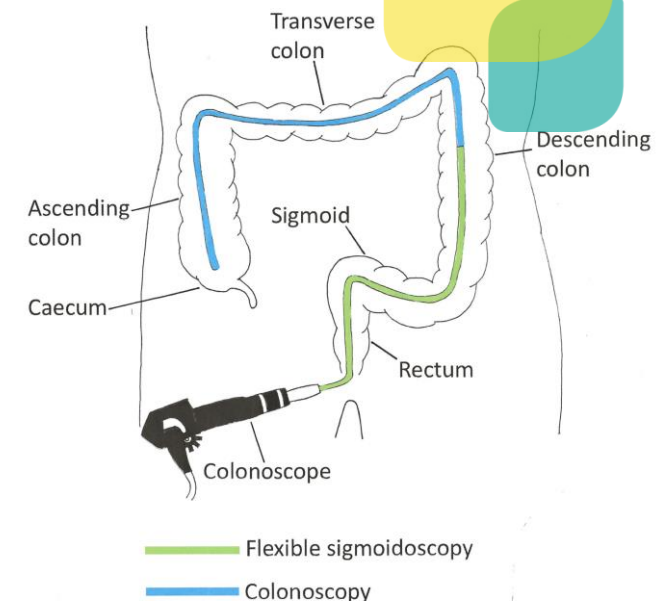
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Please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) if you require this leaflet in a different format, or would like to feedback your experience of the hospital.

Email: [ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:ruh-tr.pals@nhs.net) or telephone 01225 825656.

## Self-administration of an enema

Kindly review this information in advance of your flexible sigmoidoscopy



## Introduction

Enemas are a safe and easy way to clean the last part of the large bowel (colon), so a flexible sigmoidoscopy examination can be performed. To ensure a clear view, it is important that you follow these bowel preparation instructions.

### What is an enema?

An enema is fluid that is inserted in the rectum through the anus (back passage) to clear the bowel. The enema that you have been supplied is a single dose disposable enema.

### What are the alternatives?

The specialist who arranged your procedure has determined this bowel preparation is the most appropriate for you. Oral bowel preparation is an alternative, more commonly used for investigations examining the whole large bowel (colon) e.g. colonoscopy.

### Are there any side effects?

Fortunately, side effects are rare. They can include:

- rectal bleeding
- blistering
- burning
- itching

### When should I use the enema?

Use the enema an hour before leaving home for the procedure, even if you have recently passed a bowel motion; this allows enough time for the enema to work, and avoids issues with travel.

### How to use an enema?

Do not eat for at least 30 minutes before using the enema. You may wish to warm the enema by placing the bottle in a bowl or sink of warm water.

- After washing your hands, place a towel in a comfortable place near a toilet. Lie on the towel on your left side with your knees pulled upwards towards your chest; draw your right leg up more than the left.



- Remove the orange protective cap from the tube.
- Insert the tube gently into your anus (back passage) so that about three quarters of the tip is inside with the tip pointing towards your tummy button.

- Slowly squeeze the contents of the bottle into your back passage. Stop if you feel resistance to the fluid and try angling the tube differently; if resistance remains **stop** as forcing the fluid may cause an injury.
- Gently remove the tube from the back passage. It is quite normal to experience some leakage of the enema liquid from the rectum, and for some residue to remain in the bottle.
- Stay lying down and try to keep the liquid in as long as possible, ideally for five minutes. When you feel a strong urge to open your bowels, stand up slowly to go to the toilet as you may feel wobbly. Very rarely, some people feel faint when they try to get up. If this happens, lie back down until the feeling passes.
- You can expect frequent loose bowel movements within five minutes of the enema; this is normal and is the enema working. Stay near a toilet until the effects resolve; you can expect these to resolve within the hour.
- Discard the used bottle in a plastic bag, place in the bin and wash your hands. Drink plenty of clear fluids, such as water, after your enema, but avoid eating until the procedure has been performed.