

Using a home enema

Endoscopy Department

Information for patients and carers

• Home • Community • Hospital
Caring for you

Giving yourself a home enema

You have an appointment for a flexible sigmoidoscopy.

This procedure allows the endoscopist to look inside the left side of your large bowel with a flexible camera (endoscope).

Before the procedure you will need to do an enema to help empty your bowel.

This leaflet gives instructions on how to give yourself the enema at home.

Please also read the medication leaflet in the enema box.

What does the enema do?

An enema makes you go to the toilet to empty your bowel (have a poo) within a few minutes of using it. This cleans the lower part of your bowel so that it can be seen clearly during the examination.

Important information:

- The enema does not give you diarrhoea.
- Do not take the enema orally (in the mouth).
- It is only for use in your rectum (in the bottom).

When do I use the enema?

You need to use the enema about 2 hours before your appointment.

Please do not eat and drink 2 hours before your appointment time.

The enema usually stops working within 1 hour. This means you should still be comfortable travelling to the hospital.

How to use the enema

Please read the full instructions below before using the enema.

1. Place a towel on your bed.
2. Wash your hands before handling the enema.
3. Lie on the towel on your left side with both knees bent and your arms resting in front of you.



4. Remove the orange protective cap from the enema bottle. Pull it gently while holding the bottle upright and the grooved bottle cap with your fingers.



5. The enema is now ready to use.
6. The enema tip is already lubricated.
7. Gently insert the tip into your rectum (your bottom) with the tip pointing towards your navel (your belly button).
8. Squeeze the bottle until most of the liquid has been used.

Important: Stop if you feel any resistance. Do not force the enema as this may cause injury.

9. Gently remove the nozzle from your rectum (your bottom). It is normal to experience some leakage of the enema liquid.
10. Remain in the same position until the urge to open your bowels is strong. This usually happens within 2 to 5 minutes.

Please note:

- 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 your enema in your normal household waste.
- Please wash your hands after use.

Further information

If you have changed your mind about giving yourself the enema at home, please don't worry. Keep your appointment and bring the enema with you. Staff can give you the enema at the Endoscopy Department.

If you need advice about using the enema, please phone:

- Warrington Endoscopy Unit – 01925 662291
- Halton Endoscopy Unit – 01928 753006

The team are available Monday to Friday, 8am and 6pm.

Your call will be confidential. Please do not feel embarrassed to ask for information or advice.