

# Guidelines for using the enema

## Issued by the Endoscopy Team

This leaflet gives you information about using the enema. Please read it carefully before you use the enema.

### Why do I need to use an enema?

In order to see the lining of your bowel more clearly during the examination it is helpful if your back passage is empty. An enema is a quick and convenient way to do this as it increases the water content of your stools.

### What are the benefits?

You may find it more convenient and comfortable to use the enema at home. It is easy to self-administer and you only need to use it once before the examination. **You will be able to eat and drink** as normal up to 30 minutes before using the enema.

### What are the risks in using the enema?

If this is the first time using an enema, do not worry. Enemas are safe, gentle and simple to use. Please read the manufacturer's information leaflet supplied with the enema alongside this leaflet. If you have any concerns or queries contact the Endoscopy Unit where you are having your test.

### When not to use the enema

Do not use the enema if you are having treatment for kidney disease or colitis, but bring it with you when you go for the test.

### What are the side effects of the enema?

Like all medicines, an enema can cause side effects for some people. Some people may feel faint or dizzy, or experience mild stomach cramps for a short while, nausea or vomiting, or anal irritation.

### When do I use the enema?

Use the enema about one hour before you leave home for the test.  
Do not eat for at least 30 minutes before using the enema.  
Do not eat after using it. You will be able to eat straight after the test.  
You may drink water before the test, but not other drinks.  
You should use the enema even if you have just had your bowels open.

### Before using the enema

Make sure you are near a toilet.  
Find somewhere comfortable to lie down, and have a towel to lie on.  
Have a book, magazine or radio with you to occupy you for about 5 minutes while waiting for the enema to work.

## How do I use the enema?

Smear the lubricating jelly on the enema nozzle (first 3 inches).

Pull out the tip from the nozzle, hold the enema upright so it does not spill.

Lie on your left side on the towel.

Insert the nozzle (3 inches, up to the disc) gently into your back passage.

Squirt the contents in, remove the nozzle. Remain lying down.

Try to hold the liquid for 5 minutes but do not worry if you cannot hold it that long. Go to the toilet but do not worry if you do not pass a motion.

Stay near a toilet for the next hour.

If you feel faint or dizzy lie down until you feel better.

The enema works almost immediately, so you should have no problems travelling to the hospital.

## What if the enema does not work?

If you have just had your bowels open, you may not pass much, but even if you do not pass anything after the enema – you should still come to the hospital for your test. We will perform a digital examination of your back passage to see if there is any stool, and you may be given another enema.

## Contact us

If you have any queries please contact us Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm

### North Tyneside General Hospital

0191 349 9672

Monday to Saturday, 8am to 6pm

### Wansbeck General Hospital

01670 529 063

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

### Hexham General Hospital

01434 655 321

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

### Alnwick Infirmary

01665 626 794

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

### Berwick Infirmary

01289 356 635

Please note this unit is not open daily, if there is no response please contact Alnwick Infirmary.

If you need urgent care outside of these hours call 111 or go to:

- your local 24 hour walk-in service at Hexham, North Tyneside or Wansbeck
- your local minor injuries unit if you live in Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth or Haltwhistle

If you need emergency care dial 999 or go to the Northumbria Specialist Emergency Care Hospital, Northumbria Way, Cramlington, NE23 6NZ.

## Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

## Other sources of information

### NHS 111

NHS Choices [www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

**NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)** [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Freephone: **0800 032 0202** Text: 01670 511098

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111** [www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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