

# Self-administration of a phosphate enema

Department of Endoscopy

Information for Patients

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## Introduction

This leaflet explains how to take your medication (enema) which is important for your procedure.

## What is a phosphate enema?

An enema is fluid that is placed in the bottom (rectum) through the back passage (anus) to clear the bowel. The phosphate enema that you have been given is a single dose disposable enema. It will clean the section of your bowel that will be checked during the procedure.

## Why do I need to have a phosphate enema?

It is important to have clear views of the lower part of your colon. This is needed to help with the diagnosis of your bowel symptoms.

## What are the other options?

Oral bowel preparation is a different option. These are usually used for investigations such as colonoscopy or barium enema. This is where a closer look at all of the colon is needed.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## Are there any side effects?

Rare side effects are;

- Rectal bleeding
- Blistering
- Burning
- Itching

If you are breastfeeding, you need to express and throw away the breast milk for at least 24 hours after having the enema. This is because the main ingredients in the enema may pass into the breast milk.

## When to use the enema

Use the enema about 60 minutes before leaving home for the test. This will allow more than enough time for enema to work. Travel will not be a problem. Give yourself enough time to relax. You should still use the enema even if you have recently pooped.

If you are not able to give yourself the enema, we do have facilities to do this at certain endoscopy departments. You would need to call us to move your appointment. Contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

If you have a colostomy or ileostomy (where the bowel comes out through the stomach into a bag), please contact the endoscopy unit for advice. Contact details are at the end of this leaflet.

## How to use the phosphate enema

The enema can be used at room temperature or you may wish to warm it slightly by placing the bottle in a slightly warm (tepid) water. This should be at body temperature.

- After washing your hands, lie 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 back passage (anus), so that about 3/4 of the tip is inside with the tip pointing towards your naval.
- Slowly squeeze the contents of the bottle into your back passage. You should stop if you feel resistance to the fluid and try angling the tube differently. If resistance remains, then stop. Forcing the fluid may cause an injury.
- Gently remove the tube from the back passage.



It is quite normal to have some leakage of the enema liquid from the bottom. It is also normal for some residue to remain in the bottle.

- Remain lying on your left side for 1 to 5 minutes until you feel a strong urge to open your bowels.
- Be ready for regular loose poo within 5 minutes of having the enema. This is normal and shows that the medicine is working. Remain near a toilet until the effects have worn off.
- You may feel a little unsteady after the enema, so make sure that you do not get up too quickly to go to the toilet.
- Very rarely, some people feel faint when they try to get up. If this happens, lie down until the feeling passes.
- Throw away 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. This will help to satisfy your thirst until the procedure has been done.

## Contact details

Please call the Endoscopy unit on 0116 258 6984 between 10am to 3pm Monday to Friday.

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على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
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Previous reference:

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