

# Let's Talk About...

## Enema, small volume

If your child is constipated, they may need to use an enema to pass stool (poop) through the rectum.

### What is a small volume enema?

A small volume enema is a fluid you put into your child's rectum to soften the stool. The enema irritates the colon to help the stool move out of your child's body. Within 5–20 minutes of inserting the enema, your child should produce stool.

### How can I prepare my child for using an enema?

Enemas can be uncomfortable, so prepare your child by doing the following:

- Have your child sit by a toilet when you are ready to use the enema.
- Tell your child that the stool may come out quickly after they receive the enema. They may not get all the stool in the toilet, so make sure your child knows this is okay.
- Explain that the enema will feel cold and wet at first and may feel uncomfortable.
- Warn your child that they may get stomach cramps when the hard stool in their intestine becomes soft and starts to move through their body. It may also be painful to push the stool out.

Follow the instructions on the enema box or from your child's healthcare provider.



### Bring the following supplies into the bathroom

- ☐ Small volume enema
- ☐ Towels or absorbent pads
- ☐ A bowl of warm water

## What are some tips for inserting the enema?

- Warm the enema liquid to body temperature by putting the bottle in the bowl of warm water. Never microwave the enema.
- Put absorbent pads or towels underneath your child. This can make them more comfortable and helps with cleanup if they can't make it to the toilet after receiving the enema.
- If your child needs just half an enema, squeeze half the liquid in the bottle into the sink first.
- Tell your child to push as if they need to poop. This will help the muscles around the anus relax, and the enema will go in easier. Once you insert the tip of the enema, tell your child to stop pushing, relax and take deep breaths.
- Give your child books or toys to distract them while you insert the enema.
- Have your child sit near or on the toilet for 5–20 minutes to produce stool.

## What should I do if the enema leaks or my child is uncomfortable?

If the enema leaks while you give it, try the following strategies:

- Slow the enema down by squeezing the bottle more gently.
- Close the buttock cheeks together.
- Reposition the enema tip.
- Tell your child to relax and make sure they aren't trying to push the enema out.

If your child has a lot of cramping and discomfort while you are giving the enema:

- Make sure the fluid is body temperature.
- Slow the enema down by squeezing the bottle more gently.

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

Your child may experience discomfort, mild nausea, vomiting, or mild stomach cramps. If 30 minutes pass and your child has not produced stool, call your child's healthcare provider.

### Notes

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