

Let's Talk About...

Enterocolitis and Rectal Irrigations

What is enterocolitis?

Enterocolitis [en-ter-oh-koh-LIE-tis] is a serious infection of the intestines that happens when poop stays in the colon too long. Bacteria (germs) from the poop make toxins (poisons) that can get into the blood. These can make a child very sick and even cause death.

Why is my child at risk for enterocolitis?

Your child may be at risk for enterocolitis if they have Hirschprung's disease. This is an intestine problem that is present at birth (congenital). Enterocolitis can happen before or after corrective surgery.

What are the signs of enterocolitis?

Signs of enterocolitis may include:

- Bloated belly
- Bad-smelling diarrhea
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Watery or bloody stools
- Being sleepy or sluggish

Sometimes enterocolitis is not easy to notice. Your child may have a smaller appetite than usual, diarrhea, or stomach aches.

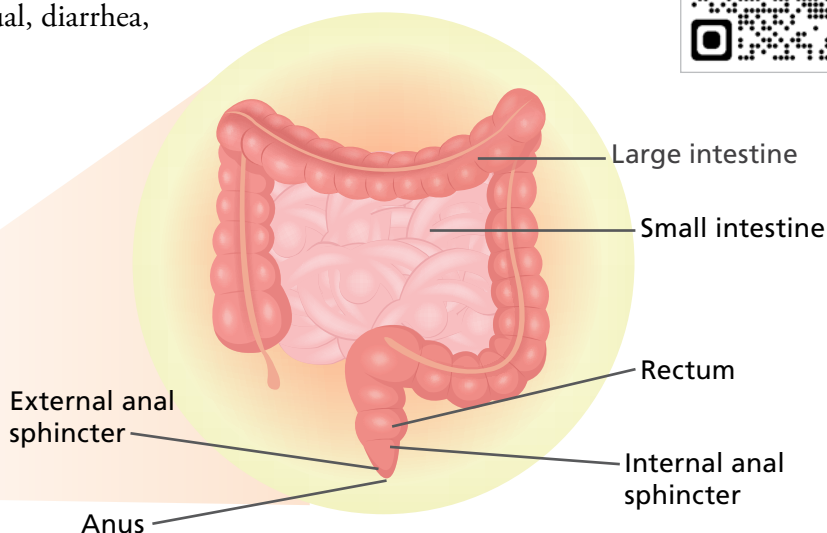
How is enterocolitis treated?

Children with severe enterocolitis must be treated in the hospital with fluids, rectal irrigations and sometimes antibiotics (either by mouth or through the IV). Less severe enterocolitis may be treated at home with rectal irrigations and sometimes antibiotics taken by mouth.

How do I know if my child needs rectal irrigations?

Your child's doctor will tell you if your child needs rectal irrigations and show you how to do them at home. You can repeat the irrigations until you have used the amount of fluid ordered by the doctor, or until the fluid that comes out of your child's rectum is clear.

To watch a video on rectal irrigations scan the code below with your phone or type in the link:
my-emmi.com/content/html?client_id=INTERMOUNTAINWEB&program_id=39707



What supplies do I need to do a rectal irrigation?

You'll need the following supplies:

- Normal saline solution (called saline or 0.9% sodium chloride solution)
 - Make your own. Mix 4 cups of warm tap water with 1½ teaspoons of table salt. **Never change this recipe or use plain water for a rectal irrigation as it could harm your child.**
 - Buy bottles of saline (called saline solution, normal saline, or 0.9% sodium chloride solution)
- 20–24 Fr. silicone catheter
- Lubricant (like K-Y jelly)
- Two bowls or emesis [eh-MEE-sis] basins (shallow, kidney-shaped bowls)

How do I give my child a rectal irrigation?

Follow these steps:

- 1 Wash your hands.
- 2 Gather the supplies above.
- 3 Put the bottle of premixed saline in a bowl of hot water to warm it to body temperature. **Never microwave it.** If you're making your own saline, use warm tap water in the solution.
- 4 Pour normal saline solution into one of the bowls or basins.
- 5 Draw up 60 mL of normal saline using a 60-mL catheter-tip syringe.
- 6 Put your child on their back with their knees pulled up to their chest. You can put a baby on their back in a frog-leg position.
- 7 Lubricate the end of the catheter well.

- 8 Gently put the catheter into the rectum about 4 to 6 inches.
- 9 Allow any air or fluid to come out of the catheter.
- 10 Connect the catheter-tip syringe to the catheter and push in 20 mL of normal saline.
- 11 Put the syringe end of the catheter over the second basin.
- 12 Disconnect syringe from the catheter and let the fluid drip into the empty bowl.
- 13 Repeat this, pushing the catheter in another 2 to 3 inches with each 20mL of fluid.
- 14 Repeat the irrigations until you have used the amount of saline your child's doctor ordered. or the fluid that comes out is clear.
- 15 If fluid doesn't come out, attach an empty 60mL syringe to the catheter and gently pull back on the syringe. If you feel resistance, stop. Move the catheter and try again.
- 16 Discard the soiled solution in a toilet.

You may need to slide the tube in or out a little to get the fluid to drain out of the rectum completely. Let the saline and stool drain out by itself before you put in more saline solution.

How often do I give my child rectal irrigations?

Your child's surgeon will tell you how often and how long you need to give your child rectal irrigations.

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