

Let's Talk About...

Rectal suppository

What is a rectal suppository?

A rectal suppository is a medicine made to insert into the rectum (anus), where it dissolves. When it dissolves, the medicine in the suppository goes into the body.

Some suppositories are stored in the refrigerator. Check the suppository box to see where you should keep the medicine. Let the suppository warm to room temperature before you use it.

How do I prepare myself and my child?

Prepare yourself by reading the directions on the suppository box. If you have questions or concerns, ask your child's healthcare provider or a pharmacist.

You can prepare your child by explaining what will happen. Explain what a suppository is. Explain that the suppository may feel cold when it is inserted. Tell your child that it may feel a little uncomfortable for a few seconds, but the medicine will not hurt and it will make them feel better.

Try playing music or giving your child toys or books. This can help distract them while you give the suppository.

Before you start, gather supplies you need:

- A room-temperature suppository, removed from the box
- A pillow or blanket for your child to rest on
- Gloves or plastic wrap (optional)



How do I give my child a suppository?

Prepare your supplies and your child:

- 1 Wash your hands with soap and water.
- 2 Encourage your child to poop before inserting the suppository. Removing stool (poop) from the rectum will make it easier to absorb the medicine in the suppository.
- 3 Wear a medical glove on the hand you'll use to insert the suppository. If you don't have gloves, wrap a piece of plastic wrap or a sandwich bag around your index finger.

- 4 If the suppository is soft or feels like it is melting, hold it under cool water or put it in the fridge for a few minutes to harden. Do this before you remove the wrapper.
- 5 If you were told to use half of the suppository, cut it lengthwise with a clean, sharp knife. Cut the suppository while it is still in the wrapper. This will prevent it from melting in your hand.
- 6 Remove the wrapper.
- 7 Lay your child down in one of the following positions in figure 1. These positions will help raise or separate the buttocks.

Figure 1

Children 3 years old and younger	Children older than 3 years old
Lay your child face down with a pillow under their hips.	Lay with their face resting on a pillow and bring their knees up in a kneeling position.
	Lay on their side with their top knee near their chest and the bottom leg straight.
	Lay on their side with their knees tucked in towards the chest.

Giving your child a suppository:

- 1 Inserting the suppository is easier if you wet it with tap water. You can also use a water-soluble lubricating jelly. This will help the suppository slide into the rectum smoothly.
- 2 Separate your child's buttock cheeks so that you can see the anus.
- 3 Hold the suppository between your index finger and thumb. Insert the suppository, pointed end first, into your child's rectum until it does not come back out. In older children, this will be about 1 inch deep.
- 4 Hold your child's buttock cheeks closed for about 1 minute so they don't push the suppository out. If the suppository comes out, put it back in by following the same steps.
- 5 Keep your child in this position (on their knees with head on a pillow and buttocks up, or on their side with knees tucked) for 5 minutes. This allows your child's body heat to melt the suppository and deliver the medicine.
- 6 Throw away the wrapper and the glove or plastic wrap.
- 7 Wash your hands with soap and water.
- 8 Have your child get dressed and resume normal activity.

Questions for my doctor

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