

How to Self-Administer Rectal Suppositories *(page 1 of 2)*



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The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

Name: Anne MacRae
Role: IBD Clinical Nurse Specialist
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Rectal suppositories are solid forms of medication that are inserted into the rectum. They come in different shapes and sizes, but are usually narrower at one end. Rectal suppositories can deliver many types of medication from constipation or pain relief, to treatment directed specifically at that area of the bowel. Medication in this form tends to work quickly, as it is designed to dissolve inside the body and is absorbed quickly through the bowel wall.

What you will need

- a private place to administer the medication
- access to hand washing facilities
- hand protection e.g. disposable glove, finger cot or cling film (a small amount wrapped around a finger if nothing else is available)
- water-based lubrication such as aquagel or KY jelly. Cool water can be used if no jelly is available
- disposal bin.

We advise you to try to empty your bowels before using suppositories.

Step by step instructions

Assemble all your equipment and the suppository. Check the suppository is solid and is not soft. If it is soft, hold it under cold water until firm, or place in the refrigerator for 15 minutes.



Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water. Make sure they are dry.



Remove the wrapper



Put on a disposable glove, finger cot (available from your pharmacist) or use cling film

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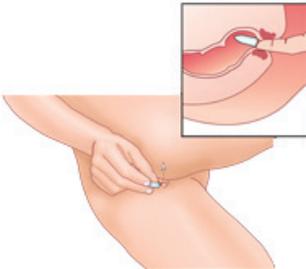
Lubricate the narrow end of the suppository with water soluble jelly or water. Do not use petroleum jelly.



Lie on your left side with your lower leg straight and your upper leg bent forward towards your stomach.



Lift up your upper buttock to expose the rectal area.



Insert the suppository, narrow end first, with your finger until it passes the tight ring of muscles (the muscular sphincter) - approximately 1 inch (2.5cms) in adults. Hold the buttocks together for a few seconds.

If not inserted past this sphincter, the suppository may pop out.



Remain lying down for about 5 minutes to avoid the suppositories slipping out.



Dispose of used materials and wash your hands thoroughly after inserting the suppository.

Remember

- follow directions carefully
- do not miss doses
- store suppositories in a cool dry place. Refrigerate if the label advises this
- store medication out of the reach of children
- any difficulties, please contact and speak to your pharmacist or GP.