

Endoscopy Unit

Bowel Preparation Instructions for flexible sigmoidoscopy (Phosphate enema)

A patient's guide

This booklet contains the instructions you must follow to have your bowel cleaned
for a flexible sigmoidoscopy appointment.

Please bring this booklet with you to your appointment



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Introduction

What phosphate enema is used for?

Phosphate enema is used to cleanse the lower bowel, also called colon, in preparation for a flexible sigmoidoscopy procedure. It does this by drawing water into the colon which softens stools and increases bowel motions.

You should have received a leaflet “Flexible sigmoidoscopy: A patient’s guide” which explains the procedure in more detail.

This booklet explains how to use a phosphate enema to prepare for your examination. Please read this leaflet carefully. If there is anything you do not understand or if you change your mind and would like to have this preparation at the hospital instead, please contact the endoscopy team on the details provided at the end of this booklet.

Before you use a phosphate enema?

Do not use a phosphate enema if you have had an allergic reaction to it or any of the excipients in the past. Please inform your hospital doctor or contact us on the number below if you have this or any other allergies.

If you have an inflammatory or ulcerative bowel condition, serious cardiac or renal disorders please contact us immediately, before using the phosphate enema as it may not be suitable for you.

You must inform the doctor if you are pregnant, attempting to become pregnant or breast feeding, before starting your bowel preparation.

If you are not sure whether you should use a phosphate enema or if you do not understand the instructions, please contact the hospital switchboard on **020 72723070** and ask for **bleep number 2711** from Monday to Friday 8:30 to 17:30 or alternatively contact your Doctor.

The success of your examination depends on the bowel being as clear as possible, otherwise the examination may need to be postponed and the preparation repeated.

Please read carefully the information inside the phosphate enema box to be sure you are not allergic to any of the ingredients.

Please make sure you are near a toilet once using your phosphate enema bowel preparation.

Medication

- Please do not take any iron tablets, constipating medication e.g. Immodium® (Immodium) or codeine for seven days before the test.
- If you are on blood-thinning treatment (e.g. Warfarin, Clopidogrel, Ticagrelor, Apixaban, Dabigatran or Rivaroxaban) please contact the hospital switchboard on 020 72723070 and ask for bleep number 2711, Monday to Friday 8:30 to 17:30 or alternatively contact your Doctor, as special arrangements may need to be made for you.
- Please continue other medication as normal.

Using the phosphate enema

The phosphate enema should only be given via your rectum (bottom). It should never be taken orally.

When to use the enema:

- You will need to use the enema around two hours before your appointment time.
- Do not eat after using the enema-you can still drink fluids.
- Still use the enema even if you have just had your bowels open.

How to use the enema:

1. Wash your hands before handling the enema and if possible wear disposable gloves.
2. Remove the cap from the enema bottle/ neck while holding the bottle upright.
3. Lie on your left side with both knees bent and your arms at rest in front of you (see pictures on leaflet inside enema package for further information).
4. Insert the full length of the nozzle carefully and gently into your bottom and squeeze the bottle until it is empty.
5. **Stop using in any resistance is encountered. Forcing an enema can result in injury. Contact the endoscopy unit for further advice.**
6. Gently remove the nozzle from your bottom. It is normal to experience some leakage of the enema liquid.
7. Continue to lie on your left-hand side. The enema should produce a rapid response; 2 to 5 minutes after dose may be sufficient to produce response. Try to hold the liquid from the enema in for as long as you can – around 15 minutes – this will help empty your bowel completely.
8. When you can no longer hold the enema, and you have the urge to go to the toilet, get up slowly and walk to the toilet.
9. If you feel unsteady after the enema, make sure you do not get up too quickly. Very rarely, some people faint when they try to get up. If this happens to you, lie back down until the feeling passes and contact the endoscopy unit for advice.
10. Return enema to carton for disposal.

If you do not have any bowel movements within an hour of using the enema or if any significant bleeding occurs, please contact the endoscopy unit for advice.

Remember: it is normal to get diarrhea (liquid stools) when a phosphate enema is used.

Please drink clear liquids to avoid dehydration.

Possible Side Effects

Phosphate enemas very rarely (1 in 10,000 people) can cause:

- Hypersensitivity (allergic) reactions
- Dehydration
- Muscle twitches and spasms due to changes in the amount of salts (electrolytes) in the blood
- Abdominal pain or bloating (distension)
- Gastrointestinal pain
- Nausea or vomiting
- Anal itching, stinging, pain or discomfort
- Blisters
- Diarrhoea
- Chills

Allergic reactions requiring medical attention are rare. Do not hesitate to contact your doctor if you experience any severe side effects, or if you are at all worried.

If you experience any of the following, **stop using the phosphate enema** and contact your doctor immediately: **rash and itching, swelling of your face, ankles or other part of your body, palpitations, extreme fatigue, shortness of breath, excessive vomiting or severe abdominal pain.**

Congratulations, you are ready for your procedure.

To contact the Whittington Health's Endoscopy Unit: dial 020 7272 3070 – Bleep 2711

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or whh-tr.whitthealthPALS@nhs.net

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please contact us on 020 7288 3182. We will try our best to meet your needs.

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