

Colostomy Irrigation

This sheet will tell you how to irrigate (clean) your colostomy. You irrigate your colostomy to clean the bowel and set-up a regular schedule for evacuation.

Try to choose a time of day when you will not be interrupted and when you are relaxed. At first, try to irrigate at about the same time each day. Later you may change the time if you need to.

Equipment

This is a list of the equipment you will need:

- Greer colostomy irrigation kit
 - 1 mounting ring
 - 1 irrigation sleeve
 - 1 belt
 - 1 irrigation bag with tubing
 - 1 cone and clamp
 - 2 clips
 - 1 carrying case
- Water soluble lubricant (K-Y Jelly)
- Tissue and/or washcloth
- IV pole or hook

Procedure

Follow these steps to irrigate your colostomy:

1. Connect tubing to the irrigation bag and close clamp.
2. Fill the irrigation bag to the 1000 cc or one quart mark, use lukewarm tap water. Water that is safe to drink is safe to use for irrigation. If you are afraid to drink the water, do not use it to irrigate.
3. Test the temperature of the water by placing a drop or two on your wrist. If the temperature is comfortable, the water is all right. Cold water will cause severe cramps. Hot water can burn your intestines. **One** quart of water is the average amount used.
4. Let the air out of the irrigation tubing by opening the clamp and letting water run through the tubing. Close the clamp. If the air is not removed it can cause severe cramps and swelling.

(over)

5. Hang the irrigation bag so the bottom of the bag is at shoulder height when you sit down. You may want to attach a permanent hook to the shower curtain rod.
6. You may find that the easiest way to irrigate is to sit on the toilet or on a chair in front of the toilet. Place a towel across your lap if you are sitting on a chair, this will support the irrigation sleeve.
7. Attach the irrigation sleeve to the mounting ring with the locking ring.
8. Remove your old colostomy appliance. Wipe the mucous and/or stool from the stoma area with a tissue or washcloth.
9. Attach the irrigation sleeve and the ring around the stoma site. Secure the rings with your belt. The end of the sleeve should skim the top of the water in the toilet. This will prevent splashing. You can cut the sleeve if it is too long.
10. Lubricate the cone with the lubricating jelly. Do not use Vaseline.
11. Work from the top of the irrigation sleeve. Gently insert about one-half to two-thirds of the lubricated cone into the stoma. If you have a hard time inserting the cone, there could be several reasons. Sometimes it is because you feel anxious. When you are tense the bowel tenses up too. A harder-than-normal stool can also interfere. ***Never force a catheter!*** There are no nerves in the lining of the colon. You could injure the colon and not feel the injury.
12. Once the cone is in place, open the clamp and let the water flow slowly into the colon. You may feel some minor cramping. If the cramping becomes severe, stop the flow of water and wait for the cramping to stop. When the cramping stops, open the clamp and start a ***slow*** flow of water again.
13. After all the water has entered the colon, pull the top of the sleeve up over the stoma and remove the cone. At first you will have a large outflow of water and stool. After most of the fluid has returned, you can rinse the inside of the sleeve with cool tap water. Most of the fluid will return within 15 minutes.
14. Fold the top of the irrigating sleeve over and close the bottom of the sleeve by folding it over. Use the two clamps in the kit to hold the sleeve closed. After most of the fluid has returned, you may walk around or do your daily activities. Activity and relaxation may help elimination. It takes about 30 to 45 minutes to complete the irrigation.
15. When you feel as if you are finished, go back to the toilet. Unclamp and empty the irrigation sleeve. Rinse it out with cool tap water.

16. Remove the mounting ring and sleeve. Clean the stoma and the skin around it. Pat dry, do not rub. The blood vessels lining the stoma are fragile. It is normal to see flecks of blood after the stoma has been rubbed or opened.
17. Apply your appliance in the usual way.
18. Wash the irrigation sleeve and the mounting ring in cool clear water and hang to dry. You can use the sleeve several times before you throw it away. Please save the faceplate. It is *not* disposable and should be reused.

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