

Colostomy Irrigation

General Information

- Similar to an enema with the water being placed into your stoma
- Routine irrigation is done on doctor's orders (to regulate emptying of the bowel at a scheduled time)
- Appropriate for some people with sigmoid or descending colostomies
- Not appropriate for people with a urostomy or ileostomy
- Should only be done based on the recommendation of a knowledgeable healthcare professional
- Allow approximately one hour for irrigation procedure



Using the Hollister Irrigation Set

1. Assemble your supplies: irrigator bag, stoma cone, irrigator sleeve, ostomy belt (if needed), water-soluble lubricant (optional), water, and a new pouch or stoma cap.
2. Close the regulator clamp on the irrigation tubing and connect the stoma cone tube to the irrigator tubing.
3. Fill the irrigator bag with the amount of water recommended by your healthcare professional. The water should be lukewarm.
4. Hang the bag at a height where the bottom of the bag is approximately at your shoulder height when you are sitting.
5. Open the clamp and allow some water to run out the end of the cone. Close the flow control clamp.
6. Remove and discard your existing pouch or stoma cap.
7. Attach your irrigation sleeve.
 - a. If you are using a one-piece irrigation sleeve, a belt will be needed. The belt should be snug enough to create a watertight seal.
 - b. If you are using a two-piece system, attach the irrigator sleeve to your skin barrier flange.
8. Find a comfortable position to sit either on the toilet or next to the toilet. Place the end of the sleeve in the toilet.
9. Open the top of the irrigator sleeve. If desired, coat the stoma cone with stoma lubricant. Gently insert the irrigator cone into your stoma as your healthcare professional has instructed you.
10. Hold the cone in place and, with your other hand, open the flow control clamp to allow the water to begin to flow into your stoma. Press the cone against the stoma gently, but firm enough to prevent leakage. If water does not flow into the stoma, rotate the angle of the cone until water flows.
11. To change the rate of water flow, adjust the flow control. If cramps occur, close the flow control until cramps subside.
12. Once all the water is in, remove the cone from your stoma and close the top of the irrigator sleeve. At this time you should have some initial returns of water and stool.
13. It usually takes from 30-45 minutes for the bowel to empty. During this time you can either sit in the bathroom or apply a pouch clamp to the bottom of your irrigator sleeve so you can move around.
14. When your bowel is empty, drain the irrigator sleeve into the toilet. Remove the irrigator sleeve and set it aside.
15. Apply a new pouch if using a two-piece pouching system or clean and dry your skin and apply a new pouch as usual.
16. Clean your irrigator sleeve and cone with gentle soap. Rinse. Allow the sleeve to air dry. The irrigator sleeve and irrigation set can be reused. Do not flush the irrigator sleeve down the toilet.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS	
How often should I irrigate?	Most people irrigate their colostomy every day or every other day. This will be influenced somewhat on your past bowel habits.
What time of day should I irrigate?	It is best to irrigate about the same time every day. You can choose the time of day that works best with your schedule.
Can I use tap water to do my irrigation?	Most tap water is fine to use. If the water is safe to drink, it is generally safe for your colostomy irrigation.
How fast should the water flow into my stoma?	That will depend upon how much water you use. If you use 1000 cc (one quart) of water, it will take approximately ten minutes. If the water stops flowing you may need to reposition the cone.
What does it mean when I experience cramps during my irrigation?	It could be because the water is going into your bowel too quickly. You can use the clamp to stop the flow of water. Leave the cone in your stoma and see if the cramps resolve. Water that is too cold may also cause cramping. Removing the stoma cone and allowing the bowel to empty should relieve cramps completely. If severe cramping persists, contact your healthcare professional.
Do I need to lubricate the cone before I insert it into my stoma?	Some people find that their bowel has enough natural mucus to lubricate the cone during insertion. If you find that the cone does not slip in easily, some water-soluble lubricant on the cone tip makes this easier.
Do I need to insert the whole cone into my stoma?	No. How far the cone is inserted varies from person to person. The cone should be snug enough to prevent water from coming out of your stoma when you begin the irrigation. If you have questions, contact your healthcare professional.

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Routine follow-up with your healthcare professional is recommended.

Prior to using any ostomy products/accessories be sure to read all product inserts and labels.

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