

Surgical Department

## Anal Dilatation Instructions

Information for parents and carers

### Why does my child need anal dilation?

Anal dilation is a safe and simple procedure, that stretches the anus. It may be done before an anorectal operation and it is particularly important after surgery to help prevent the body from forming scar tissue and narrowing the new anal opening.

### What equipment do I need at home to perform the dilations?

You will be provided with a dilator, that has two different sizes and is bigger at one end.

- Dilator: Size \_\_\_\_\_
- Lubricating jelly
- Nappy

### How do I do the dilation?

1. Place your child on their back in a frog leg position, as though you are changing their nappy.
2. Place a clean nappy under your child's bottom.
3. Hold their feet in one hand, over their stomach so you can see their bottom clearly. If your child is older, they can lie on their side.
4. Cover the end of the dilator in lubricating jelly.
5. Hold the dilator like a pencil and gently push the dilator about 1 to 1.5 inches (2.5 to 4 cm) into the anus and hold in place for about 30 seconds.
6. As the dilator passes you may feel a slight "popping" sensation, this is normal.

### How often do I do the anal dilations?

Your child's surgeon will perform the first dilation in the hospital. If this is after an operation, this is usually around 2 weeks later.

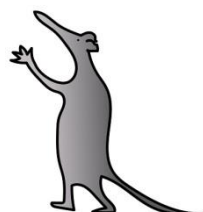
Your nursing team will then teach you how to perform dilations, so you can continue to do this at home. Your child's surgeon will tell you what size dilators you should use and how often you should dilate at home.

Your child will be regularly reviewed in outpatients department, to assess if we need to use a bigger dilator. Once they have reached the final size and the dilator passes easily, we will start reducing the frequency of dilations.

### When should I do the dilation?

Don't worry too much about the time. Choose a time of day that fits best into your routine, maybe have another person around to help and distract. If you are doing dilations more than once a day, do one in the morning and one in the evening.

### What will my child feel?



Your child may feel a small amount of discomfort during the dilation. Most children will grunt or push against the dilator and may pass some poo, which is normal.

Once the dilation is done, your child should not be in any further discomfort.

We understand this may be a scary procedure for you to perform and your child may become upset, but it is very important and helps to prevent further surgical problems.

### What can I expect after the dilation?

Your child will be able to pass poo easily after the dilatation. You may see a little bit of blood at the time of the dilation or with their next poo. This is expected for the first few days when starting dilations or after increasing the size of the dilator. If the bleeding does not stop you should seek medical advice.

### When do I stop doing dilations?

You will continue to carry out dilations until the rectum has completely healed and has reached a desired size.

### When should I seek medical advice?

- If you meet resistance and are unable to pass the dilator.
- If your child seems to be in pain.
- If your child has persistent bleeding from their bottom or passes a large amount of blood (more than a 10p coin sized spot in the nappy).

### Who to contact:

Please contact the Surgical Advanced Nurse Practitioners on 0151 252 5416.

This information has been adapted from patient information produced by [Michigan Medicine](#)

This leaflet only gives general information. You must always discuss the individual treatment of your child with the appropriate member of staff. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about your child's treatment. This information can be made available in other languages and formats if requested.

Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust  
Eaton Road  
Liverpool  
L12 2AP

Tel: 0151 228 4811

[www.alderhey.nhs.uk](http://www.alderhey.nhs.uk)

