How to use Micralax enemas

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What are Micralax enemas?

Micralax enemas are rectal laxatives for relieving mild to moderate constipation. They are for rectal use only – this means that they are inserted into the back passage.

Micralax enemas are used to empty the back passage of stool which encourages the bowel to empty. As they are very efficient in emptying the back passage they are also used in the treatment of faecal leakage. This is effective because when the back passage is empty there is nothing there to leak out and so cause an accident. They can also be used to treat the symptoms of a rectocele, which is a bulge in the wall of the rectum into the vagina.

How do they work?

The enema liquid inside the back passage lubricates and softens faecal matter. Lubricating and softening stool helps to prevent straining during a difficult bowel movement.

The contents of the Micralax enema attract water from the bowel into the mass of hardened stool to relieve constipation quickly and effectively. They also help the muscles in the rectum to move more effectively in order to facilitate a bowel movement.

When used for people with leakage problems this emptying of the lower bowel prevents leakage of stool for the rest of the day and so helps with confidence. They can be used with loperamide in this situation as the loperamide slows the bowel movement down, and the enema helps in emptying the back passage completely.
What are the risks?

Micralax enemas are very safe to use and do not interact with other medication. It is safe to use them long term to help control symptoms. There are uncommon side effects related to using the enema, but they are normally mild. Side effects associated with Micralax enemas typically include mild irritation, abdominal pain and loose stools.

Burning and irritation is reported with insertion of the enema. The irritation is normally felt in the area of the back passage, and some women report vaginal burning. The irritation does not last long because it occurs immediately before the bowels are opened. Abdominal pain is another side effect that accompanies the insertion of the enema. Cramps will often subside shortly after the bowels are empty.

If you notice any other side effects or have any concerns whilst using Micralax, tell your doctor or pharmacist.

What are the benefits?

The benefits of using Micralax enemas are easier passage of stool from the back passage. As they help to completely empty the back passage of stool they are also useful in treating leakage and incontinence. Some people find it useful to firm the stool consistency by using loperamide on a regular basis. The enemas can then be used daily to empty the firmer stool from the back passage. As the back passage is then empty this can prevent leakage and incontinence.

What are the alternatives?

There are other enemas available but they contain much stronger medication or are a larger quantity of fluid and therefore have more side effects.
How to use Micralax enemas

1. Wash hands thoroughly in warm water and soap.
2. You may opt to use gloves.
3. Position yourself comfortably. Lying on your left side with feet level or slightly elevated is the best position for inserting an enema.
4. When ready, twist and pull the cap off the nozzle of the enema.
5. Use water soluble lubricant to coat the nozzle. Alternatively you can squeeze a drop of liquid out of the tube to lubricate the tip of the nozzle.
6. Insert the nozzle fully into the anus (back passage).
7. Squeeze out the contents fully by squeezing the shoulder of the tube.
8. Keeping the tube squeezed tightly, withdraw the nozzle.
9. Lie still and hold the enema inside the back passage for 10-15 minutes.
10. Remember to wash your hands with soap and water after your bowel movement.
11. Empty tubes of Micralax may be safely disposed of by wrapping in paper and placing in the dustbin with the household waste.

How many do I use?
The enema should only be used once a day at the most. Ideally the bowel should be emptied in the morning as that is when the urge is strongest. However, if you have insufficient time it may be necessary to use it in the evening after a meal. Some people may only need to use them occasionally when they feel that the bowel hasn’t emptied properly. They are a safe medication and are not addictive so can be used long term.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to ask

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Useful contacts
Bladder and Bowel Foundation
Helpline: 0845 345 0165
www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org

Core
Telephone: 0207 486 0341
www.corecharity.org.uk
Please use the space below to write down any questions you may have and bring this with you to your next appointment.
The Trust provides free monthly health talks on a variety of medical conditions and treatments. For more information visit www.uhb.nhs.uk/health-talks.htm or call 0121 371 4323.

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