

Tips for Giving Medication by Suppository

Giving medication by suppository involves administering medications through the rectum and into the large intestine where the medication is absorbed.

Using a suppository is usually a last resort, as families are often concerned about the dignity of the person being given the medication.

To help someone with a suppository, you will need a glove and a water-soluble lubricant for the anal area (such as K-Y Jelly), as directed by the pharmacy or healthcare provider. Suppositories should be well lubricated and pushed as far into the rectum as the gloved forefinger can reach.

Below are the steps for administering medication by suppository.

Before...

- If the suppository has been in the fridge, allow some time for it to warm up.
- Wash your hands.
- Put on your disposable medical gloves.
- Read the instructions on the label to ensure you are giving the right dose of the right medication at the right time.

Administering

- Ask or help the person to lie on their side, with the upper leg bent forward.
- Lubricate the suppository and ask the person to take a few deep breaths to try to relax the muscles around the anus.
- Spread the buttocks to expose the anus and slide the depository into the rectum, about 5 centimetres.

After

- Having the suppository in place may trigger a bowel movement.
- Unless this was the intention of the suppository, encourage the person to hold it in place for a least 15 minutes to allow time for the medication to absorb.
- Dispose of the gloves and wash your hands.
- Document the medication in your medication tracking journal.

**Avoid using Vaseline or another petroleum-based product, as it might interrupt the melting of the suppository*

**It is important that there be no stool in the rectum. Otherwise, the person may defecate and force out the suppository before it is fully dissolved. If possible, the person who will be receiving the medication should try to have a bowel movement first.*