

# Anal dilation instructions

## WHY DOES MY CHILD REQUIRE AN ANAL DILATION?

Anal dilations may be performed in children who have anorectal malformations. Anal dilation helps stretch the anus so the anal canal stays open. The procedure helps your child have better bowel movements.

## WHAT SUPPLIES DO I NEED FOR THE DILATION?

You will be given instructions on how to obtain Hegar dilators. You will need a water-soluble lubricant, such as Surgilube or KY Jelly. We also recommend placing a towel or diaper under your baby because the process can be messy. (Please use the QR code on the reverse side of this handout to learn more about the suggested dilator.)

## HOW WILL I KNOW WHAT SIZE OF DILATOR I NEED TO USE?

When we perform an anal dilation, the first size dilator that we use is usually one that we know will fit very easily (slide in and out with no resistance). The next size up should fit snugly but with minimal resistance. The third size up should provide a little pop when it is inserted. If significant force is needed to insert the dilator, the next size down should be the maximum for a couple of days. Your surgeon will tell you which sequence you should use for your child (e.g., 4-5-6; 6-7-8) and when it is time to increase the size of the dilator.

## WHEN SHOULD I PERFORM ANAL DILATIONS?

We usually recommend that you do the dilations when it is convenient for your schedule and your baby's schedule. You should aim to perform two dilations per day, usually one in the morning and one at night, unless otherwise instructed.

## HOW DO I PERFORM THE DILATION?

1. Place the baby on his or her back and extend the feet toward the head like you are about to change a diaper.
2. Gently clean your baby's bottom with a wipe.
3. Make sure you have a good view of the anal opening.
4. Lubricate the tip of the smallest dilator you are using.
5. Hold the dilator like a pencil and insert it until it is just over the ridge of the widest point of the dilator (about 1 to 2 centimeters).
6. Once the dilator is correctly placed in the anus, hold it in place for 30 seconds.
7. Repeat with the next sizes of dilators.

## HOW WILL MY CHILD REACT TO THE DILATIONS?

Your child may feel a small amount of discomfort with the dilations. However, it is not causing significant pain, and your baby will calm down shortly after the dilation is performed. Your child can poop during or after the dilation and may have a small amount of blood from the dilation.

## WHO WILL MANAGE THE DILATIONS?

Your pediatric surgery team will let you know which size of dilator to use and for how long you should continue the dilations. The team will also answer any questions or concerns you have about the process.

## WHEN SHOULD I CALL THE DOCTOR?

- If your child has bleeding after the dilation that does not stop or seems to be more than normal, please call the office.
- If you cannot pass a dilator (including smaller sizes) or the dilations seem to cause your baby more pain than normal, please call the office.
- If your child's stomach seems to be bigger or rounder than normal, if vomiting occurs (especially green in color) or if your baby has not passed a stool for longer than is normal, please call the office.

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