

Rectal Diazepam

Instructions for Home Use

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Most seizures are brief and cease spontaneously within 5 minutes. If a seizure does not stop by itself within 10-15 minutes it becomes a medical emergency. Seizures lasting greater than 30 minutes may lead to brain and bodily injury.

For prolonged seizures, doctors usually use an intravenous injection of diazepam or similar anticonvulsant medication. In young children, doctors sometimes prefer to use diazepam injected into the rectum rather than into a vein. This is a technique that parents and carers can learn to use, if necessary.

INDICATIONS FOR HOME USE OF RECTAL DIAZEPAM

A neurologist or paediatrician may consider rectal diazepam in the following situations:

- a child with a pattern of prolonged seizures (>10 mins.) which have previously responded to intravenous or rectal diazepam.
- a child with clusters of repeated seizures in whom oral treatment is not appropriate.
- a child with severe epilepsy who is remote from emergency services.

Rectal diazepam is not necessary for children with mild or well-controlled forms of epilepsy.

RECTAL DIAZEPAM PREPARATION

The pharmacies at the Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) and some other major hospitals supply "rectal diazepam kits".

The RCH kit contains:

- a 25ml bottle of diazepam mixed with a stabilising solution, containing one mg of diazepam in each one ml.
- a reusable 10ml syringe.
- a reusable soft plastic tube to attach to the syringe for drawing up and injecting the diazepam.
- a sachet of lubricant jelly.

RISKS OF RECTAL DIAZEPAM ADMINISTRATION

- Diazepam, if given in excess or in addition to certain other drugs, may cause depression or brief cessation of breathing. Therefore, it is recommended that an ambulance be called before proceeding with the rectal diazepam injection. Parents and carers should consider learning basic first aid and resuscitation skills.
- Injury to the rectum is possible with rectal diazepam injection but the risk is small with the soft plastic tube supplied with the RCH kit.

The risk of a child having brain damage after a very prolonged seizure is greater than the risks associated with administration of rectal diazepam.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE OF RECTAL DIAZEPAM

If a child is having a seizure in which he/she is convulsing or is unconscious, it is important to follow simple first aid measures ie. protection from injury, positioning on their side to assist breathing.

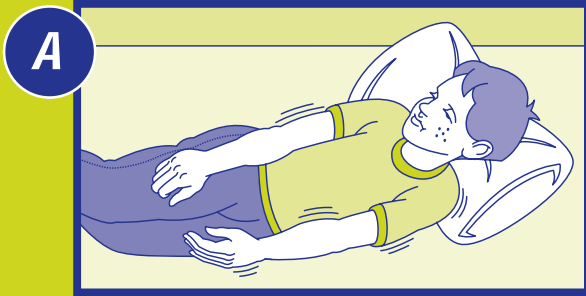
Your doctor will have instructed you on when to give rectal diazepam (what type of seizure, what duration) and how much. The usual dose is 0.5mg per kg body weight (max. 10mg).

1. Put on gloves.
2. Attach the soft plastic tube to the syringe and draw up the number of mls that your doctor has prescribed.
3. Phone for an ambulance, or other medical help to attend, unless instructed otherwise.

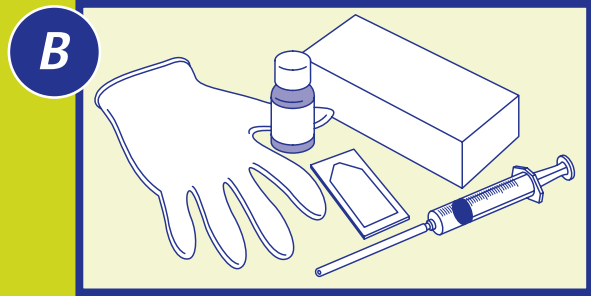
4. If the seizure or cluster has not ceased, inject the diazepam into the rectum. With your child on his/her side separate the buttocks and after lubricating the soft plastic tube, which is still attached to the syringe, gently insert it through the anus for a distance of approximately 5cm, so that there is 2-3cm of the tube still in view.
5. Inject the prescribed dose.
6. Remove the tube from the anus and hold buttocks together so that the diazepam does not leak out.
7. Rectal diazepam may take 5-10 minutes to work. Do not repeat the dose unless previously advised.

Prepared in accordance with a positional statement for use of rectal diazepam: Somerville E.R., Anthony J.H., Position statement on the use of rectal diazepam in epilepsy. MJA 1995 163: 268-269.

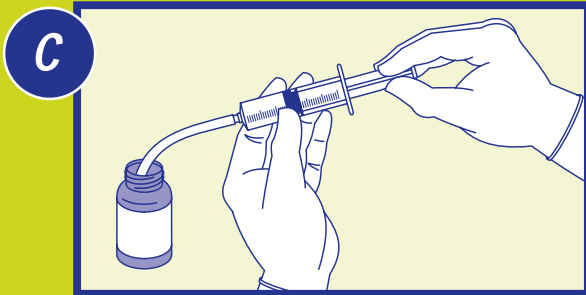
Administering Diazepam



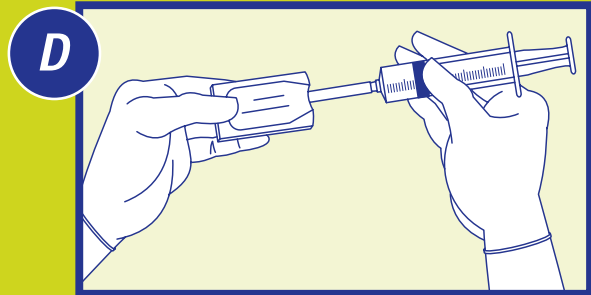
A Place child on their side where they can't fall or injure themselves. Call for ambulance or medical assistance, unless instructed otherwise



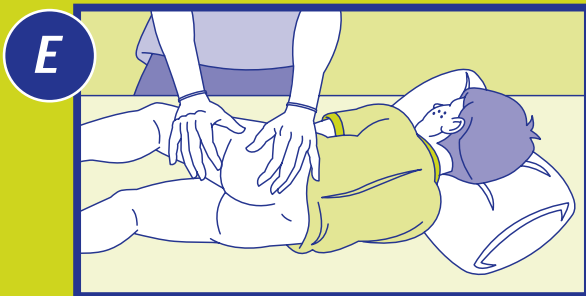
B Remove contents from box and attach tube to syringe.



C Draw up prescribed dose of diazepam.



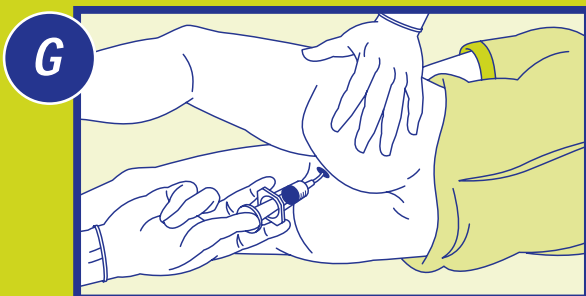
D Lubricate tip of tube with lubricating jelly.



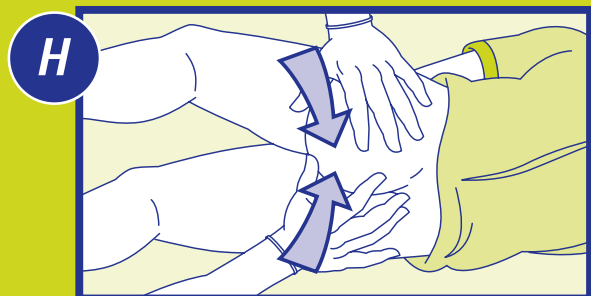
E Bend upper leg forward.



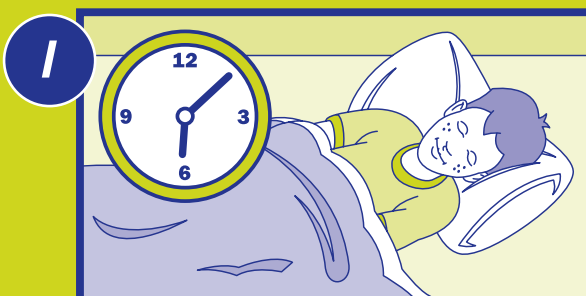
F Separate buttocks to expose anus.



G Gently insert tube about half way into rectum and inject diazepam.



H Withdraw syringe and tube and slowly count to 3 while holding buttocks together to prevent leakage.



I Keep child on their side facing you, note time given and continue to observe.

When to give: _____

How much to give: _____

Special instructions: _____

Emergency contact: _____

Remember: Call for ambulance or medical assistance before you give diazepam, unless otherwise instructed.