

## Bowel washout brochure for families

Bowel washouts are performed to clean the intestines of its contents (faecal matter and secretions). Washouts are required for the management of:

- Constipation
- Prior to procedures for bowel investigations
  - Colonoscopy
  - Colonic manometry catheter placement
  - bowel surgery

Some children are able to drink the bowel preparation liquid at home (Picoprep). This can be between 150-500ml in one or two parts depending on age.

This liquid causes your child to have multiple bowel actions, cleaning out all faecal matter and secretions. However, some children cannot tolerate drinking this volume of solution. For these children, admission to hospital the day before their procedure is needed so that the bowel preparation can be given by a nasogastric tube (NGT).

A nasogastric tube is a small thin tube that is inserted through the nose, down the throat & passed into the stomach. A Gastroenterologist will prescribe the amount of solution required. This is based on your child's weight.

Insertion of the NGT can sometimes be distressing for the child and parents/guardians.

The nurse will talk to you about the use of sedation for your child to help minimize discomfort and anxiety. Sedation is not mandatory, but does help some children by making them sleepy and relaxed.

Sedation requires a fasting period of 2 hours – this means your child cannot eat or drink anything for 2 hours prior to the sedation medicine being given. Information regarding time of fasting will be sent out to you prior to admission. The sedation that is used for this procedure is Nitrous Oxide (a gas) or Midazolam (a medicine taken by mouth), and in some cases these may be used together (refer to the sedation link for more information)

Educational play therapy (EPT) may be available for support during business hours. The EPT team provide individualised support to children and young people to promote effective coping in the following ways:

- Developmental play opportunities
- Medical play
- Procedural support
- Preparation for procedures
- Development of coping strategies (comfort positioning, breathing techniques, cognitive distraction)

If you feel that your child would benefit from EPT please contact the Clinical Nurse Consultant for Gastroenterology, at the time you are informed of the booking, and a referral will be made. Please advise as early as possible if you would like EPT involvement. Please note EPT is not available for weekend admissions

Once the NGT is inserted, the bowel preparation solution can be commenced. The preparation is administered over 4-6 hours. This is given continuously by an infusion pump that is connected to your child's NGT. Your child may opt to stay in their room, or wander around the ward, however, while the solution is infusing, they must remain on the ward. Your child will have urgency with opening their bowels, and they should remain close by to toilet facilities. The ward has some activities and each room has a TV for distraction, you are also welcome to bring in your own electronic devices.

Some children may experience nausea, vomiting or tummy aches while the solution is being given – please let the nurse looking after your child know if they have any of these effects. If needed, the rate of the fluid can be slowed down or a small 'break' may be given to allow the symptoms to settle.

Patients may experience numerous bowel actions into the night. For toilet trained children, we recommend explaining to them before you come into hospital that they might not get much warning before they need to use the bathroom. Sometimes, accidents happen and we'll do everything we can to help children make sense of this should it occur.

All our hospital wards will provide nappies and dry wipes, however you are welcome to bring in your own supply (wet wipes, nappies, pull-ups) if you prefer.

Having numerous bowel actions can lead to dehydration. For this reason, children are encouraged to drink clear fluids (cordial, water, clear apple juice) during the infusion. If they are unable to do so, the nurse will administer a special solution (commonly known as Hydralyte/Gastrolyte) via the NGT after the bowel washout has finished. This solution replaces vital minerals (electrolytes) and water that are required to maintain hydration. Your child will need to fast for their procedure on the following day, your nurse will tell you what time fasting will begin.

The following day your child will be transferred to the operating theatre area for their procedure. After the procedure you will be able to speak with the Gastroenterologist or Surgeon. Your child will be moved to the Day Surgery Unit where they can eat and drink once awake. Once recovered, you will be discharged home.

Available links for more reading:

*Nasogastric tube*

[https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact\\_sheets/Nasogastric\\_tubes/](https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Nasogastric_tubes/)

*Sedation*

[https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact\\_sheets/Sedation\\_for\\_procedures/](https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Sedation_for_procedures/)

*Educational Play therapy EPT*

<https://www.rch.org.au/ept/>

Contact numbers:

**Hospital manger: +61 3 93456292**

**Possum ward +61 3 9345 5582 (Ask for Nurse In Charge)**

**Gastroenterology Clinical Nurse Consultant +61 3 9345 5082**