



University Hospitals Birmingham
NHS Foundation Trust



The Anal Plug

Building healthier lives

UHB is a no smoking Trust

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www.uhb.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets.htm

What are anal plugs?

The anal plug is a soft foam tampon which is designed to go into the back passage. Once in place it gently expands to fit the rectum and so prevents leakage of stool. The anal plug is designed to be used to prevent accidents and so most people use them for reassurance when they are going out. They can be used on a daily basis or occasionally to provide confidence.

How do they work?

They are designed to be used by people who have faecal incontinence or leakage of stool. They are made of soft foam which is coated to allow the plug to be inserted. This coating then dissolves in the warmth and moisture of the back passage. This happens in approximately 30 seconds allowing the plug to expand to fill the back passage. By filling the back passage the exit of stool is blocked allowing time to get to the toilet so preventing accidents. They only work if the stool is formed, they do not work for people with loose stool. There are two sizes available to ensure the best fit.

What are the risks?

The anal plug does not suit everyone. Some people find them uncomfortable to wear. Some people find that their bowel contracts and pushes the plug out, even when it is expanded. They do not work for people with loose stools.

What are the benefits?

If they work and are comfortable they can reduce or prevent bowel accidents. This can give greater confidence when going out. It can also reduce the risk of sore skin and embarrassing smells. Anal plugs are available on prescription.

What are the alternatives?

The alternatives are to empty the back passage so that there is nothing present to leak. This can be done by using suppositories, enemas or washouts.

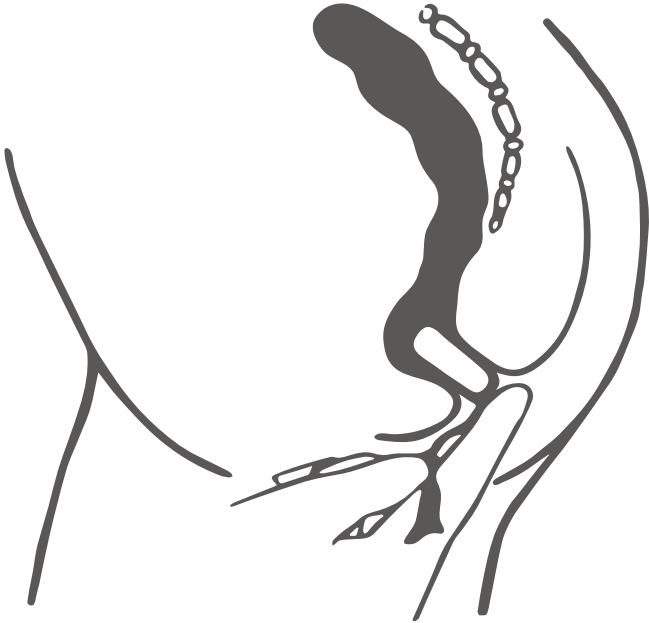
How to use anal plugs

1. Wash hands thoroughly in warm water and soap.
2. You may opt to use gloves.
3. Open the package of the plug, but keep the suppository inside the package until you are ready to use it.
4. Position yourself comfortably. Lying on your left side with feet level or slightly elevated is the best position, but they may also be inserted whilst sitting on the toilet.
5. When ready, take the plug out of the package and hold it in between your thumb and middle finger. Be careful not to drop it.
6. Use the water soluble lubricant (provided in the pack) to coat the blunt end of the plug.
7. Insert plug directly to the anus until only the string is visible. (Usually to the depth of your finger is sufficient).
8. Hold in place for at least 30 seconds to allow plug to expand.
9. The plug can be left in place for up to 12 hours.
10. Remember to wash your hands with soap and water afterwards.
11. To remove pull the gauze string gently. Removal will not start a bowel movement.

Wrap the used plug in toilet paper and dispose of in a waste bin. **DO NOT** flush it down the toilet

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

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Contact details

Colorectal clinical nurse specialists

Telephone: 0121 371 4980

Telephone: 0121 371 4501 (answerphone)

Useful contacts

Bladder and Bowel Foundation

Helpline: 0845 345 0165

www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org

Core

Telephone: 0207 486 0341

www.corecharity.org.uk

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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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