



# Glycerin (glycerol) suppositories for constipation

This leaflet is for parents and carers about how to use this medicine in children. Our information sometimes differs from that provided by the manufacturers, because their information is usually aimed at adults. Please read this leaflet carefully. Keep it somewhere safe so that you can read it again.

## Name of medicine

### Glycerin (glycerol) suppositories

#### Why is it important for my child to have this medicine?


When a child is constipated, their stools (poo) are hard and painful to pass. Sometimes a child may try to hold the stool in because of previous pain when going to the toilet. Constipation can also make a child feel quite poorly. Glycerin suppositories are used to stimulate emptying of the bowels and provide rapid relief from constipation.

#### When should I give glycerin suppositories?


Your doctor will tell you when to use the suppositories.

#### How much should I give?

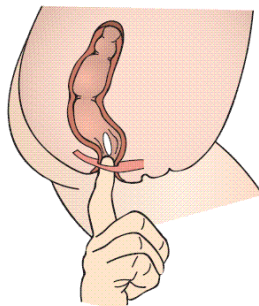
Glycerin suppositories are available in **1 g, 2g and 4 g** sizes. Your doctor will decide which size (the dose) is right for *your* child. The dose will be shown on the medicine label.

 **It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions.**

#### How should I give glycerin suppositories?

 **Suppositories are administered through the anus (back passage) into the rectum. They must not be taken by mouth.**

- Wash your hands with soap and hot water.
- Your child should lie on their side or front with, if possible, their knees drawn up towards their chest.
- Hold one buttock gently to one side so that you can see the back passage.
- Unwrap the suppository and hold it with the rounded end close to the back passage.
- Use one finger to push the suppository gently into the back passage. It needs to go in by about 2 cm.
- Wash your hands again with soap and hot water.
- To help make insertion more comfortable you can put a small amount of lubricant (such as K-Y jelly) on the rounded end of the suppository, or moisten it with a little water.



- Lower their legs to a comfortable position to help hold the suppository in place. Your child should stay lying on their side for about 15 minutes to allow the suppository to spread further inside the bowel and to make sure it doesn't come out.
- If your child feels that the suppository must come out immediately, it may not have been inserted far enough.

#### When should the medicine start working?

Glycerin suppositories usually work after about 15 minutes. If your child does not empty their bowels (do a poo), do not insert another suppository. Contact your doctor for advice, in case this is because of a problem other than constipation.

#### What if my child is sick (vomits)?

You do not need to worry if your child is sick, as the suppository will still work.

#### What if I give too much?

If you are concerned that you may have used too much, contact your doctor or local NHS services (details at end of leaflet). Have the medicine or packaging with you if you telephone for advice.

#### Are there any possible side-effects?

We use medicines to help our children, but sometimes they have effects that we don't want (side-effects).

Glycerin suppositories may cause:

- stomach cramps
- irritation around the back passage.

There may, sometimes, be other side-effects. If you notice anything unusual and are concerned, contact your doctor. You can report any suspected side-effects to a UK safety scheme at [www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard](http://www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard)

#### Can other medicines be given at the same time as glycerin suppositories?

- You can give your child medicines that contain paracetamol or ibuprofen, unless your doctor has told you not to.
- Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have used, or are using, any other medicines to treat your child's constipation.

#### Is there anything else I need to know about glycerin suppositories?

- Glycerin suppositories are known as stimulant laxatives. They should only be used to provide rapid relief from temporary constipation. They should not be used to treat chronic (long-term) constipation (unless recommended by your doctor).

- Before giving glycerin suppositories, always increase the amount of high-fibre foods (see below) that your child eats and encourage them to drink plenty of water, or use an 'osmotic laxative'. This is another type of laxative that works by softening the stools.
- You can help your child's constipation by giving them high-fibre foods such as fruit, vegetables, bran and high-fibre cereals. Also encourage them to drink plenty of water, which will help to soften the stools. Encourage your child to be active as this will also help their constipation. Your pharmacist, doctor or health visitor will be able to give you advice and support.
- If you think someone else may have used the glycerin suppositories by accident, particularly if they have other health problems, contact your doctor for advice, although they are unlikely to be harmed.

### General advice about medicines

- Only give this medicine to your child. Never give it to anyone else, even if their condition appears to be the same.
- Make sure that you always have enough medicine. Order a new prescription at least 2 weeks before you will run out.
- Make sure that the medicine you have at home has not reached the 'use by' date on the packaging. Give old medicines to your pharmacist to dispose of.

### Where should I keep this medicine?

- Keep the medicine in a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach the medicine.
- Keep the medicine in the container it came in.

### Who to contact for more information

Your child's doctor, pharmacist or nurse will be able to give you more information about glycerin suppositories and about other ways to treat constipation.

You can also get useful information from:

#### England: NHS 111

Tel 111

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

#### Scotland: NHS 24

Tel 111

[www.nhs24.scot](http://www.nhs24.scot)

#### Wales: NHS Direct

Tel 0845 46 47 (2p per minute) or 111 (free)

[www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)

#### Northern Ireland: NI Direct

[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

#### ERIC: The Children's Bowel & Bladder Charity

Helpline 0808 169 9949

[www.eric.org.uk/constipation](http://www.eric.org.uk/constipation)

#### NHS: Guide to constipation in young children

[www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/constipation-and-soiling](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/constipation-and-soiling)

[www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)



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The primary source for the information in this leaflet is the British National Formulary for Children. For details on any other sources used for this leaflet, please contact us through our website, [www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk](http://www.medicinesforchildren.org.uk)

We take great care to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct and up-to-date. However, medicines can be used in different ways for different patients. It is important that you ask the advice of your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure about something. This leaflet is about the use of these medicines in the UK, and may not apply to other countries. The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH), the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG), WellChild and the contributors and editors cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of information, omissions of information, or any actions that may be taken as a consequence of reading this leaflet.