

## What is anal dilatation and why do I need to do it?

Anal dilatations stretch the anus and keep it from getting smaller. This may be done:

- After surgery to create an anal opening.
- After a “pull thru” surgery.
- After your doctor has done a rectal exam and has told you that this is needed to help stretch your baby’s anus.

## What supplies do I need?

- Plastic white anal dilator(s).
- Water soluble lubricant such as KY jelly.
- Soap and water for cleaning the dilator when you are done.
- Pad or diaper and diaper wipes if you use them.



## How often should I do the dilatation?

Your doctor will tell you how often and how long to do it. Most often dilatations are done one or two times a day for a few weeks. They may need to be done for as long as 6 to 7 months. Find a regular time when it is easiest for you to do them. It is often helpful to have another person help you. Your baby will learn it is part of their routine.

My baby needs dilatations with # \_\_\_\_\_ anal dilator \_\_\_\_ times per day.

## How do I do it?

1. Wash your hands.
2. Put your baby on their back with a clean diaper or pad under their bottom.
3. Dip the end of the dilator in the lubricant.
4. Hold your baby's feet and ankles in one hand up over their stomach so you have a clear view of the anus.
5. Start with the smaller dilator. Hold it like you would a pencil and gently push the dilator about 2 inches into the anus. Hold in place and slowly count to 10.
6. As the dilator passes you may feel a slight popping.
7. If this goes easily and you were told to use two sizes of anal dilators, lubricate the next size dilator. Repeat steps 3 to 5.
8. Remove the dilator. Clean and diaper your baby.
9. Comfort your baby if they are crying.
10. Clean the dilator with soap and water and wash your hands.

## What will my baby feel?

Your baby may feel a small amount of pain during the dilatation. Most babies grunt or push against the dilator because they feel like they need to poop. Sometimes your baby will poop during dilatations. Once the dilation is done your baby should not be in any more pain. You may give Tylenol® one hour before the dilatations for pain. Ask your baby's doctor how much Tylenol to give. Children and teens who have had dilatations as babies don't recall this later in life.

### What can I expect after the dilatation?

Your baby should poop easily after dilatations. You may see a small amount of blood at the time of dilatations and after the next poop. Bleeding should not continue.

**ALERT:** Call your child's surgeon, surgery nurse, or clinic nurse if you have any questions or concerns or if:

- You meet resistance and are unable to pass the dilator.
- You are not able to comfort your baby.
- Your baby bleeds after more than one or two poops after dilatations, or if your baby passes a spot of blood larger than a quarter.
- Your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**For other health and wellness information, check out this resource:**

<https://kidshealth.org/ChildrensWi/en/parents>

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**