

Anal Dilation

Anal dilation is a safe procedure that helps stretch (dilate) the size of the anus.

Why does my child need an anal dilation?

Anal dilations may be done before, after anorectal surgery, or for other medical conditions. The dilations are important to keep the anus open especially after surgery, to help stop the body from forming scar tissue that can make the anal opening smaller. Your care provider will tell you when you need to do anal dilations.

What things do I need for my child's dilations?

You will need an 8-piece set of metal Hegar dilators. The dilators look like this:

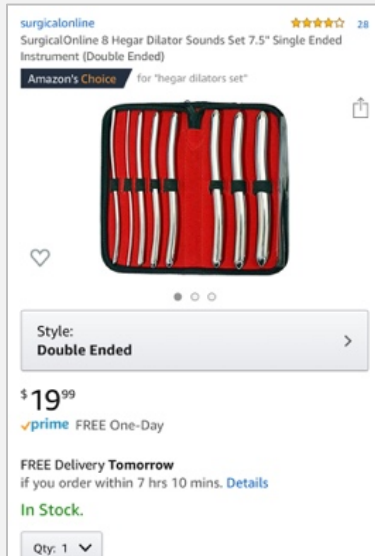


Where can I order Hegar dilators?

You can order these dilators online at any time. There are a number of online retailers you can order from, including **Amazon** and **Walmart**. Online search words you can use:

- “Hegar dilators”
- “gynecology instruments”
- “double ended uterine instruments”

You can find out more about how to purchase the dilators “How To Order Metal Hegar Dilator” handout.



What are some important details I should know when buying the dilators?

- the average cost is between \$18-30 dollars
- the 8-piece set includes several different sizes from #3 through #18
- the dilators are double ended to accommodate the various sizes
- the rods are round, slightly curved and have a cone shaped tip
- the rods are made of high quality medical grade stainless steel
- **DO NOT buy the plastic dilators**
- shipment to your home averages about 2-3 days depending on the retailer

Should I bring my purchased Hegar dilators to the clinic or the hospital?

DO NOT bring your dilator set from home.

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he 8-piece set of metal Hegar dilators you purchase will be used **ONLY** at home.

When receiving care at the clinic or the hospital, the facility will provide the Hegar dilator to be used.

What other supplies do I need at home to perform the dilation?



You will need:

- metal Hegar dilator (size is determined by your provider)
- water soluble lubricant like Surgilube® or K-Y Jelly™, or other generic water soluble gel
- pad, towel, or diaper
- someone to help you hold and position your child if needed

How to Do an Anal Dilation

Follow the instructions below to do an anal dilation on your child at home:

Step 1



Always wash your hands well before and after performing anal dilations.

Step 2



Gather your supplies and place them close to you and your child so you can reach them.

Put a clean diaper or cloth under your child's bottom.

Step 3



Figure 1



Figure 2

Figure 1: Put them in a frog leg position similar to the position to change their diaper. Hold their feet and ankles in one hand over their stomach so you have a clear view of their bottom, the anus.

Figure 2: We encourage **two** people to do the dilation to avoid the risk of the dilator causing any harm to your child's new anus. Another person can hold your child's feet to the correct position. So that the tops of the thighs are pressing into your child's belly and comfort your child. Make sure you have a firm hold on your child.

*An older child can be placed on their side.

Step 4



Select the correct size dilator.

The dilator size is labeled on the middle of each dilator shaft.

Step 5



Select the right end of the dilator to hold. To do this look for the number that shows you the dilators size, then make sure that number is upright and facing you. The cone shaped tip should be pointing away from you.

Hold the dilator like you would a pencil. Lubricate the end of the dilator that will go into your child's anus with a water-soluble lubricant like Surgilube® or K-Y Jelly™.

Step 6



Gently put the dilator in the anus, twist it, and push the dilator in about 1.5 to 2 inches, about the length of your thumb. You may feel some resistance as the muscles tighten. The dilator should pass smoothly with gentle pressure and you may feel a slight "popping" feeling.

DO NOT force the dilator if it does not go in smoothly.

Try to comfort and sooth your child as much as possible during dilations.

Your child might cry or resist. This is normal. The dilation should not be painful. If your child is crying, wait for when your child takes a breath or stops crying to insert the dilator. During these moments, their anal sphincter relaxes.

Hold in place for 30 seconds. You may gently roll the dilator back and forth between your thumb and first finger during this time.

Step 7

Clean the dilator after each use with warm soap and water. Dry well and replace it in its case or in a sealed plastic bag (i.e. Ziploc).

When do I call the doctor?

- If you meet resistance and the dilator will not go in at all
- If your child seems to have severe pain during the dilations
- If your child has persistent rectal bleeding
- If your child does not stool for more than 24 hours

Pediatric General Surgery office, 24 hour phone line at **(650) 723-6439**.

How often do I do the anal dilations?

Your care provider will do the first dilation in the clinic or in the hospital usually around 2 weeks after surgery and they will determine the starting size of the dilator to use.

Starting Size =	Desired Size =
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- You will be instructed on how to do a dilation with a return demonstration
- Dilations must continue twice a day, in the morning and at night
- The dilation size needs to progress or a scar will form
- Usually, we increase the dilator size each week or every 2-3 week intervals, determined by the MD/NP/PA
- If you are having trouble inserting the next size, insert the smaller size first and then the larger size (for example, if going from #8 to a #9; insert the #8 first followed by the #9)
- You will have clinic visits scheduled to monitor the progress of dilations
- Once the final size has been reached and passes easily, we will start (lowering) the frequency of dilations

What can I expect after the dilation?

Your child should stool easily after dilation. You may see a small amount of blood at the time of the dilation or with the next stool. This is expected for the first few days when starting dilations or after increasing the size of the dilator. If the bleeding does not stop contact the office.

Anal Dilation Progress Sheet

When do I stop doing dilations?

You will continue dilations until the rectum has completely healed and has reached a wanted size. You will slowly decrease the dilation schedule as directed by your provider. The chart below shows the schedule for tapering dilations.

How often	How long
Once a day	1 month
Every other day	1 month
Every third day	1 month
Twice a week	1 month
Once a week	1 month
Once a month	3 month

When do I call the doctor?

- If you meet resistance and the dilator will not go in at all
- If your child seems to be in severe pain with the dilations or has persistent rectal bleeding
- If your child does not stool for more than 24 hours

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Anal Dilation Progress Sheet

Date	Current Dilator Size/Frequency	Advance to Dilator Size/Frequency	Return to Clinic	Comments



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