

Anti-inflammatory suppositories for period and pelvic pain fact sheet

Anti-inflammatory suppositories are small white, waxy, bullet-shaped pellets that are inserted into the anus to help reduce period and pelvic pain. Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) are also called 'anti-inflammatories' and are used to reduce inflammation in the body.

How do anti-inflammatory suppositories work?

NSAIDs work by stopping the body making chemicals called prostaglandins. Prostaglandins are chemicals that are made by the uterus around period time. They can cause the crampy pains on the first few days of a period. NSAID medications can help reduce period pain caused by prostaglandins or a migraine headache.

How do I use anti-inflammatory suppositories?

To use the suppository:

1. Unwrap the suppository from its foil wrapper.
2. If possible try and go to the toilet and empty your bowel prior to inserting the suppository.
3. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water. Put on a disposable glove or fingercot (pictured), if desired.
4. Insert the suppository gently through the anus, past the muscles around the anus and up into the bowel. This is easier if you wet the suppository with some water or a small amount of vaginal lubricant on the suppository.
5. If possible do not empty bowel for approximately 1 hour so the suppository has time to melt and be absorbed.



What are the risks?

NSAIDs should not be taken in pregnancy. They are not suitable for those who are elderly, take blood pressure medication, have kidney disease, stomach ulcers, gastritis or whose asthma is triggered by aspirin-like medications.

When should they be used?

To be most effective, NSAIDs should be taken early when pain begins, to reduce the prostaglandins being produced. While oral NSAIDs often provide pain relief for 3-6 hours, NSAID suppositories can last for 12 hours. These can be great for use before bed for those who wake through the night with pain.

Where do I buy anti-inflammatory suppositories?

If they help you, anti-inflammatory suppositories can be bought from a pharmacy with a script from your doctor. The script should read '50 or 100mg Diclofenac Sodium suppository'. Remember that these are for sometimes use, not everyday, as they can irritate your stomach. You do not need to use the fingercot if you prefer to insert the suppository with lubricant alone, but they can be purchased from a pharmacy.

This fact sheet provides general information only. It is not intended to provide specific medical advice or replace advice from your healthcare practitioner.

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TIPS FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH AN INTELLECTUAL OR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY WHO EXPERIENCE PERIOD/PELVIC PAIN AND HEAVY BLEEDING



Pain Assessment & Communication Tools

You know your teen best. Tools to facilitate clear communication of pain between you, your teen and health professionals can be helpful.

- Wong Baker FACES[®] Pain Scale
- Paediatric Pain Profile
- QENDO App

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Managing Heavy Bleeding

- Period products for comfort and function- preventing skin break down, infection and physical removal eg tabbed wrap-around pads, period undies, bed pads
- Tranexamic acid to reduce bleeding - discuss with GP
- Hormonal options to control bleeding - discuss with GP

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Managing Constipation

- Optimal hydration
- Fruit for stool softening e.g. kiwi fruit and prunes
- Vegetables for fibre
- Supplements to soften stools &/or encourage bowel movement - discuss with pharmacist or GP
- Dietitian/Nutritionist input

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Medication

Anti-inflammatory medications

- Ibuprofen (Nurofen)
- Diclofenac (Voltaren)
- Naproxen (Naprogesic)
- Mefenamic acid (Ponstan)

Oral liquid or suppository forms of medications are available if there are issues with swallowing.

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Hormonal Options

Longer term options to control the amount of bleeding and reduce pain:

- Oral Contraceptive Pill (the 'pill')
- Progestogen-only tablet
- Implanon (the 'rod')
- Intrauterine Device (IUD)

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Relax Pelvic Muscles

Assisting your teen with:

- Stretches to relax the pelvis
- Regular position changes
- Heat i.e. heat packs, warm baths
- Relaxed tummy breathing
- Pelvic Health Physiotherapist input

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Environment and the Senses

Things that can heighten pain experience, can also be adjusted to reduce pain; find what works best for your teen.

- Light - blue or dim lighting
- Noise - calm, rhythmic tunes or their favorite music
- Odour - familiar, fresh scents
- Touch and Temperature - optimal room temperature, comfortable clothing

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Mental Health

Validate your teen's experience of pain and approach pain in a calm manner, providing reassurance.

- Mood - do things they enjoy
- Mindfulness and meditation
- Pain Psychology input
- Learn more about pain
- Promote good sleep

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Talk to a Health Professional

Partner with your GP or other Allied Health Professionals about your teen's experience.

- Talk about symptoms and management strategies
- Discuss medications and potential drug interactions
- Referral to specialists if need be eg Gynaecologist, Pain Specialist

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DISCLAIMER: THIS FACT SHEET PROVIDES GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC MEDICAL ADVICE OR REPLACE ADVICE FROM YOUR HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONER.