

- **Step 7:** Clean up! Shower or clean however works best for you. Make sure whatever tool you were using is cleaned and dried off so bacteria isn't able to build up between uses.

You can start anal play right away after douching or give your body some time to flush out any water/saline that might have gotten trapped inside and not properly pushed out on your first attempt(s). Remember you may need to go back and try again, or you might find that it just isn't working this time and that's okay too.

sexual pleasure series

anal douching

Anal douching is a method of “cleaning” your rectum before anal sex. Although your body is already pretty good at keeping poop out of the way before it's ready to exit, some people still prefer to make sure they're totally empty before getting into anal play.

The human body already has a pretty effective waste-removal system in place, and for many people eating a high-fibre diet, drinking lots of water, and getting regular exercise are enough to keep them regular and their rectum and anal canal empty between bowel movements.

Your body normally keeps poop in your sigmoid colon, which is above your rectum in your digestive tract. The rectum is the part of your colon where poop is kept *just* before it's ready to be passed, and the anal canal is a small tube at the end of your rectum surrounded by muscles that relax and constrict to help with pooping. All of these have a mucous membrane that helps poop pass smoothly and prevents bacteria from entering the surrounding tissue. Most of the time, your rectum and anal canal are fairly poop-free.

What is anal douching?

Anal douching refers to squirting water or other liquids like saline up your rectum to flush out any poop or other material that may come out during anal sex. Douching can help prevent accidental messes, keep things less smelly, and sometimes help people feel more comfortable during anal play where things may go up their butt.

- Douching is *not* a necessary part of anal sex. Usually when you have a bowel movement your body can clear out all the poop in your rectum on its own.

For youth ages 13-29

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Is anal douching safe?

Usually we say that anal douching is safest when done using the right tools, the right liquids, the right techniques, and in moderation (around once or twice a week). Some devices may be too sharp, may not be lubricated enough, might get too deep, or might be filled with something that isn't great for your rectum, and that can lead to discomfort or injury.

It's also possible to over-douche and end up drying out your rectum by flushing away its mucous lining. This can lead to a higher chance of tears or infections including STIs (sexually transmitted infections).

- Usually when people douche, it's because they feel more confident that there won't be any accidents, and this makes them more comfortable and relaxed. While douching can help keep things less messy, it's not a perfect science and sometimes shit happens!
- In the end, it's up to *you* to decide whether douching is something you want to do. This factsheet is meant to provide information on how to do it safely and effectively.

Choosing the right tools

Not all liquids are body-safe: we usually recommend sticking with warm water or saline as it won't upset the balance of electrolytes in your rectum or cause unhealthy bacteria to grow. You'll also want to make sure you're using a body-safe lubricant like silicone-, oil-, or water-based lube to help insert the nozzle. Both water/saline and lubricant choice are important regardless of what tool you use.

- **Enema bulbs** (aka douche bulbs) are one of the most common types of anal douching tools available. They usually consist of one rubber or silicone bulb to hold the water, and a nozzle for insertion.
- **Water bag douches** have a similar function. They look like typical hot water bottles but may also come with a tube or nozzle for insertion, an adaptor to control the flow of water, and a hook so you can hang it and use gravity to let the water flow into you.
- **Fleet enemas** are over-the-counter saline solutions. They come in small bottles with lubricated plastic nozzles for insertion. They may or may not come with additional refills.
- **Showerhead attachments** are devices that hook right up to your shower. They tend to be made of metal or plastic and are typically cylindrical and may come with additional head attachments. Water flow and pressure is often controlled using a dial on the attachment itself or using the shower faucet.

- **DIY options** like squeezable water bottles can work in a pinch but are meant to be held up to your buttock rather than inserted and tend to be a bit harder to use and less reliable than other methods.

Remember any tool you can manually control the flow and pressure of water will likely to be safer and easier to use than constant flow options like shower attachments. Pressure that's too high or allows too much water into your body might damage your colon or make the process take longer by stimulating digestion and causing more poop to leave your colon and move down into your rectum.

How to douche

When done correctly, douching should only really take around 10 or 15 minutes, sometimes less. That's because you're only aiming to clear out your rectum, and not your entire colon. Going slow, squeezing gently, and being mindful of how much water is entering your body make the process smoother and safer than trying to rush.

- **Step 1:** Make sure your tools are clean prior to using.
- **Step 2:** Fill your bulb with warm (not hot) water or a body-safe solution like saline.
- **Step 3:** Try gently inserting a lubed finger or nozzle into your rectum to get your body used to the sensation before inserting anything all the way inside you. If it hurts at any point, stop what you're doing. You may need to go slower, try more lube, relax, or wait until you're ready at another time.
- **Step 4:** Over the toilet or in the shower, slowly insert the nozzle inside your rectum and *gently* squeeze the bottle, bulb, or bag making sure the water leaves the douche *slowly*. If you're using a shower attachment, set the pressure as low as possible. The goal is to only fill the rectum with water/saline and use your body to flush it out, not to use the stream of water to dislodge anything or get too deep.
- **Step 5:** Gently pull the nozzle out of your butt. At this point you can wait a few seconds before pushing the water/saline and any lingering poop out or push it out immediately. Try not to move around too much as this can cause the water to enter your colon, causing more poop to enter your rectum. When you empty out, consider doing it over a toilet the first few times to make sure any larger bits don't get stuck in your shower drain.
- **Step 6:** Repeat steps 4 and 5 until the water/saline is clear enough for your liking. That might mean it comes out totally clear, or you may just be trying to get rid of the big stuff. It's up to you!