

What a glycerin suppository does

Glycerin suppositories are a mild, short-term remedy for constipation. Glycerin draws water into the rectum and lubricates and stimulates the bowel, usually producing a bowel movement within 15–30 minutes.

Supplies you may need

- Glycerin suppository (check the package for age-specific product and dose)
- Clean tissue or washcloth
- Warm water (or a water-based lubricant if needed)
- Gloves (optional, for caregiver use)
- Soap and water to wash your hands

Step-by-step instructions

1. Read the package and label. Follow manufacturer directions and any instructions from your healthcare provider. Do not use a suppository that is damaged or expired.
2. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
3. Unwrap the suppository at the pointed end. If it's soft because of warmth, you can chill it briefly in the refrigerator (do not freeze) so it's firmer for insertion.
4. Optional: moisten the tip with a little warm water or a water-based lubricant. Avoid getting lubricant on medication instructions or packaging.
5. Get into a comfortable position for insertion. Common positions:
 - Lying on your left side with your right knee pulled toward your chest (left lateral position).
 - Lying on your back with knees bent and feet flat.
 - Standing with one foot on a low stool and leaning forward.
6. Gently push the suppository, rounded/pointed end first, into the rectum:
 - Adults: insert about 1 to 1.5 inches (2.5–3.8 cm) past the anal opening.
 - Children: generally about 1/2 inch (≈1.3 cm); follow the package or a doctor's instructions.
 - Infants: usually about 1/4 to 1/2 inch; always check the product label or ask a clinician before use in young infants.
7. Hold the buttocks together briefly (a few seconds) to help keep the suppository in place, then relax.
8. Remain lying or still for 10–15 minutes if possible so the suppository dissolves and begins to work. The urge to have a bowel movement usually occurs within 15–30 minutes.
9. When finished, wash your hands again. Clean any small residue from the skin with warm water and a washcloth.

Aftercare and what to expect

- You may feel cramping or a strong urge to pass stool — this is normal.
- If there is no bowel movement after one dose and you are unsure, follow package directions or contact a healthcare provider before repeating the dose.

Precautions and when not to use

- Do not use if you have severe abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, fever, or unexplained rectal bleeding — contact a healthcare provider right away.
- Talk to a clinician before giving to newborns or young infants; many products are not

recommended for very young babies without medical advice.

- Do not use repeatedly for long-term constipation without medical supervision. Frequent use can cause dependence or mask an underlying problem.
- Read active ingredients and avoid if you have a known allergy to any component.
- If you have recent rectal or anal surgery, severe hemorrhoids, or inflammatory bowel disease, check with your surgeon or gastroenterologist first.

Storage and disposal

- Store suppositories as directed on the package (usually at room temperature out of direct heat; some recommend refrigeration in hot climates so they remain firm).
- Discard used or unwrapped suppositories; do not reuse.

When to call a healthcare provider

- Constipation lasts more than a week or is recurrent.
- Severe abdominal pain, fever, or vomiting occurs.
- There is rectal bleeding or black/tarry stools.
- The suppository causes irritation, swelling, or signs of an allergic reaction.

Quick tips

- Always follow the product label and any clinician instructions.
- Use the smallest age-appropriate product for children and infants and ask a clinician if you're unsure.
- If you are uncomfortable inserting the suppository yourself, a trained caregiver or clinician can help.

If you want, tell me the age of the person who needs the suppository and any medical conditions — I can give more specific, age-appropriate guidance.