For further information or help with any stoma questions contact your STN or visit www.stomaltherapy.com and click on “Find a STN”

Disclaimer: The information in this brochure:
- has been developed as a general guide only
- relates to adults only
Any concerns need to be discussed with your STN or doctor

Prepared by the Australian Association of Stomal Therapy Nurses Inc. Education and Professional Development Subcommittee www.stomaltherapy.com

References:

Review due 2019
Level 1V Evidence (Expert Opinion)
What is colostomy irrigation?
Colostomy irrigation is a way to regulate your bowel movement by emptying your colon at a regular time. By inserting water through your colostomy the colon is stimulated to empty. Doing this on a regular basis means you may only need to wear a small appliance between irrigations.

Is colostomy irrigation suitable for me?
Colostomy irrigation may be a suitable method to manage your colostomy if your stoma is formed in the lower part of the colon where the motion is more formed. Your Stomal Therapy Nurse (STN) and Surgeon will be able to advise if you are suitable to use colostomy irrigation and when it may be started.

Precautions
- Not suitable for people having chemotherapy and radiation therapy
- If you have a parastomal hernia irrigation may not be effective
- Do not put any additives in the irrigation water

Benefits of irrigation¹
- Greater sense of control over your bowel output
- Improved sense of security in social settings and intimate situations
- Less appliance use
- Reduce wind / gas from the stoma

Aspects about irrigation²
Your STN will provide you with education and support on how to do colostomy irrigation. When you are confident to perform the procedure on your own you will be supported as required.

Useful tips
- Perform colostomy irrigation at the same time each day – irrigation is usually done every second day but this will be dependent on your dietary intake and lifestyle. Your STN will develop an irrigation plan to best suit your needs
- Plan your irrigation at a time and place suitable to you. Most people prefer to do this in the bathroom in the morning
- Use the same amount of water at each colostomy irrigation – the volume of water required varies and will be advised by your STN
- Use tepid tap water
- Always use an approved colostomy irrigation kit
- You will need authority from your STN to obtain an initial colostomy irrigation kit which is available on the Stoma Appliance Scheme
- Your STN will advise you on appliances to use in between colostomy irrigations
- Drink adequate amounts of fluid to prevent dehydration as this may affect the success of your colostomy irrigation
- See your STN annually and if you have any problems with your colostomy or irrigation
- Avoid colostomy irrigation if you are feeling unwell or have diarrhoea
- Do not irrigate if you notice a change in your stoma or abdominal shape around the stoma
- Do not use water that is too cold or hot as this may cause cramping of your bowel or make you feel dizzy
- Use cooled boiled water if your available water is not from a reliable and safe source e.g. tank water or bore water