



Home delivery by OakMed

# What is Transanal/Rectal Irrigation?



# Transanal Irrigation

Your healthcare professional has suggested transanal/rectal irrigation may be a helpful way to manage your current bowel problems and has referred you to your local GoldCare nurse specialist. This leaflet explains what is involved with irrigation, to help you decide if this is something you would like to trial.

## What is transanal irrigation?

Transanal irrigation, or TAI as it is commonly known, is simply instilling water into the rectum (back passage) via the anus to stimulate a bowel movement. It is used to manage a variety of bowel problems, such as constipation or faecal incontinence. This is usually carried out whilst sitting on the toilet and for the vast majority of people it is something they can manage independently.

## How often will it need to be done?

This will depend on the type of bowel problem you have and your GoldCare nurse will be able to advise you more specifically. Typically though, TAI needs to be carried out on a daily basis initially, with some people finding they can use less often as their routine establishes. We know that for best results in the long-term TAI will need to be done every 24-48 hours for the majority of people.

## Will TAI make my bowel go back to 'normal'?

TAI is a way to manage bowel symptoms, rather than a 'cure' for the underlying bowel problem that has caused the symptoms. If you decide to stop using TAI it is likely that your bowel problem will return.

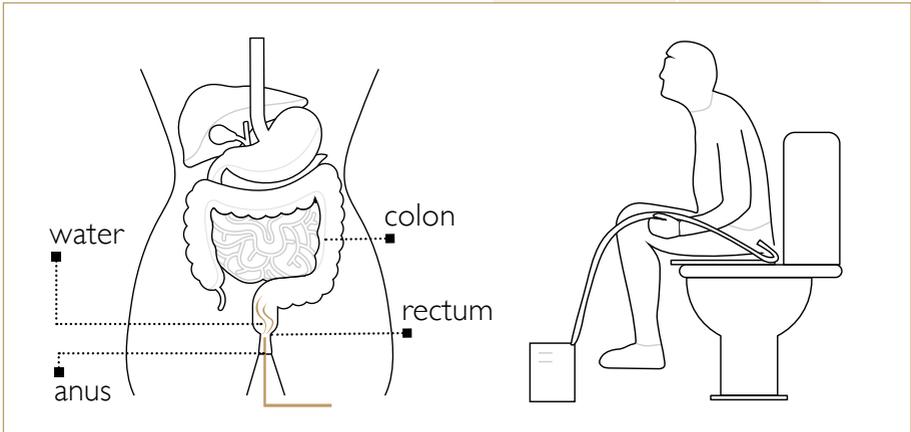
## How long will it be until my symptoms improve?

With any new management plan there is always an element of 'trial and error' in the early days. Some people find that TAI gives immediate great results, but the majority find that it takes a little longer to establish a routine that works best for them. Your GoldCare nurse will support you with finding the best routine for you and it can take up to three months to achieve this. The aim is significant improvement or complete resolution of your symptoms. If after three months you are unhappy with the results you can, of course, stop.

## Will I still need to take my bowel medication when using TAI?

In the early days yes, it is likely that you will need to continue to take your laxative or anti-diarrhoeal medications. As your TAI routine becomes established your GoldCare nurse will advise you as to when to reduce or stop any medications you are taking. Some people will, however, need to continue bowel medications alongside TAI in the long-term.





### Are there risks involved with TAI?

With any rectal intervention there is always a small risk of bowel perforation (a small tear in the lining of the bowel). The estimated risk of this is very small (around 1 in 500,000) and your GoldCare nurse will explain what to do if you suspect this has happened. Your nurse will show you how to prepare and administer your TAI to minimise the risk of bowel perforation.

### Which system will I use?

Before your visit at home, your GoldCare nurse will signpost you to some on-line irrigation videos, to give you an idea of what is involved. Your nurse will assess your individual needs and discuss which system is likely to suit you best. This will be dependent on several factors:

- What volume of water you will need
- Your manual dexterity
- Your balance and mobility
- Your ability to carry out TAI independently

You will be actively involved in choosing which system you use. Once you have started TAI the system can always be swapped for an alternative if for any reason it is not suiting you. Your GoldCare nurse will provide impartial advice on TAI systems – there is no requirement to use a particular system or brand.

### Where do I obtain my supplies?

All TAI systems are available on NHS prescription. You can obtain these either through your local chemist or through a home delivery service. For patients who use the GoldCare delivery service, a full follow-up package of care and long-term support is provided. For those who choose to use their chemist or an alternative home delivery service, follow-up is provided by the local NHS team who referred you for TAI. Either way, your GoldCare nurse will explain how and when to re-order your supplies.



## Who are GoldCare?

GoldCare are a specialist home delivery service, who are contracted with the NHS to dispense stoma, bladder and bowel products to patients via NHS prescriptions. As part of this service they also provide access to specialist community nurses. All of the GoldCare Clinical Nurse Specialists are highly experienced and qualified in the field of stoma, bladder and bowel care and hold professional registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council. They work in partnership with your local NHS teams to provide high quality, impartial advice and support on stoma, bladder and bowel care.

Your GoldCare Clinical Nurse Specialist is:

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