

Title of Document	Anal Plug
Name of Department	Clinical Team

What type of document is this?	Work Instruction (WI)	This is a simple guide to follow in order to complete a particular task	
Which Helping Hands policy/SOP does this WI relate to?	NA	Index number of policy/SOP	NA

Which Operational Priority/Priorities does this document link to?	Governance Framework	Superior Client Care	People, Performance & Culture	

Custodian of document	Clinical Team	Committee/Group responsible for this document	Quality & Governance Committee
Approval date and committee chairperson signature	31.07.2023	When is its next scheduled review?	31.07.2026

Who does it apply to?	All staff working with clients					
	Does it apply to bank workers?	No	Does it apply to agency staff?	No	Does it apply to third party contractors?	No

Purpose of the Work Instruction	To give clarity and guidance to the relevant staff on the use of Anal Plugs
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## **ANAL PLUG WORK INSTRUCTION**

### **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 An anal plug is a discreet aid used to manage faecal incontinence or leakage; it cannot be seen by others as it is worn inside the body. It is made of soft foam which conforms to the shape of the rectal cavity. The anal plug is inserted like a suppository. The foam is compressed into a shape much like a suppository, covered with a water-soluble film. Once inserted into the rectum, the water-soluble film dissolves, allowing the foam to expand and conform to the shape of the rectal cavity. This then prevents uncontrolled loss of stool or gas from the bowel. An anal plug can be left in place for up to 12 hours. It is removed by gently pulling on the soft gauze string attached to the plug.

### **2.0 Process**

- 2.1 The carer explains the procedure to the customer and gains consent. If the customer is unable to give informed consent a 'best interests' protocol and Mental Capacity Assessment should be completed.
- 2.2 The carer prepares all necessary equipment – new anal plug unwrapped, wipes or toilet paper, clean warm water, clean towel, and bag for rubbish, and assists the customer into the appropriate position. If lying on the bed, ideally the customer needs to be lying on their left side, similar to the recovery position, ensuring the customers privacy and dignity are maintained. A clean incontinence sheet or towel is placed under the customer's bottom. Some customers prefer to sit on a commode or shower chair.
- 2.3 The carer washes their hands and dons' clean apron and gloves. Two gloves may be worn on the dominant hand if necessary.
- 2.4 Removes the previous anal plug by gently pulling on the gauze string. Dispose of the anal plug into a tied rubbish bag then into domestic waste, do not flush down the toilet. Removing the plug will not stimulate the bowels to open.
- 2.5 Encourage the customer to open their bowels or perform their usual bowel management regime to ensure that the bowel is emptied before a new anal plug is inserted. Provide personal care as needed and ensure that the peri-anal area is clean and dry.
- 2.6 Prepare the new anal plug by applying a small amount of water based lubricant to the tip of the plug. Do not use petroleum jelly or baby lotion.
- 2.7 Insert the anal plug gently into the anus, just as you would a conventional suppository. Ensure that the entire anal plug is inserted into the rectum, just inside the anal sphincters. Leave the gauze hanging outside of the body.

- 2.8 The anal plug is now correctly positioned in the rectum and will quickly expand to full size as the water soluble film dissolves in the body's natural warmth and moisture. It may be left in the rectum for up to 12 hours.
- 2.9 The anal plug must be removed no later than 12 hours after insertion. If you experience difficulties removing the anal plug, contact the customer's GP or NHS111.
- 2.10 The carer should then clear away any soiled waste and support the customer with dressing and repositioning as needed. After removing gloves and apron the carer should then wash their hands.
- 2.11 Complete the activity schedule, documenting any issues as needed.

### 3.0 Training

- 3.1 All carers supporting customers with anal plugs must complete annual training and competency sign off with a Regional Clinical Lead or a registered healthcare professional (external trainers must provide evidence of competency sign off). The online learning module for anal plugs must also be completed.

**Note – Equality Impact Assessments are not required for Work Instructions**

What was the previous version number of this document?	Version 1	
Changes since previous version	Information updated following manufacturers guidelines.	
Author of the document	Regional Clinical Lead.	
Who was involved in developing / reviewing/ amending this work instruction?	Clinical Manager	
How confidential is this document?	Restricted	Can be shared freely within Helping Hands but NOT outside

Associated Documents	N/A
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