



HOW TO DO AN ENEMA (BASTI)

Cleanse and Replenish!

It is said in Ayurveda that vata imbalances are the cause of 80% of all diseases. Enemas balance just that by focusing on the seat of vata—the colon. Vata drives elimination (of excess doshas and feces, urine, and other waste) and controls healthy and efficient movement in the body. Further, the colon has a lining that is said to have an intimate connection with bone tissue. It is no wonder that enemas are a fundamental part of Ayurvedic practices and cleansing! Please consult with a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner before doing basti to customize the practice in a way that is appropriate for you.

BENEFITS

- Disperses and grounds vata, benefiting all vata imbalances
- Nourishes and rejuvenates tissues, particularly bone tissue
- Helps relieve occasional back discomfort
- Helps to maintain healthy elimination and bowel health
- Assists in internal cleansing

SOME GENERAL TIPS

- Basti is best done on a clean and empty stomach (not after a night of partying!) and when well-rested.
- This practice is particularly beneficial during vata times of the day (early morning or evening).
- Make sure you have all materials ready and accessible before starting the practice. You will need an enema bag (enema bottles may also be used), some oil, measuring cup, the herbal decoction or oil, and towels to lie on.
- Create a calm and serene environment that is soothing to vata. Try grounding yourself with a warm self-oil massage (abhyanga), keep the temperature warm, and make the room free of clutter. You will want easy access to a toilet.
- You will feel a strong urge to use the restroom shortly after administering the enema, especially if you are new to the practice. Release the enema fluids from the bag *slowly* and do your best to keep your mind and body calm. Generally, if you can ease your body past this initial urge, your body will become much more relaxed.
- After your enema, eat a warm, grounding, easy to digest meal (such as kitchari).

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Create a comfortable lying space on towels with a hook close by to hang your enema bag.
2. Test the temperature of the enema fluid on your wrist and make sure that it is comfortably warm and not hot.
3. Make sure the enema tubing is clamped shut. Fill the

enema bag with the fluid (typically two cups worth of decoction, or one fourth up to one cup of oil).

4. Lubricate the end of the enema tubing with sesame oil or sunflower oil
5. Lying on your left side, gently insert no more than six inches of the tubing into your rectum.
6. Gently release the clamp until the fluid is slowly running through the tubing.
7. Once all of the fluid is in your colon, clamp and remove the tubing.
8. Lie on your left side, followed by your back (with the buttocks elevated) and then your right side for five minutes each. After lying on each side, lie on your back and massage your abdomen in a counterclockwise motion (up the left side, across the top, and down the right side of the abdomen).
9. Attempt to hold the fluid up to 45 minutes to an hour (the longer you hold the fluid, the more beneficial the practice is).
10. Go to the toilet and release the fluid and fecal matter. Consider wearing a sanitary pad for several hours after, especially if you did an oil basti.

TYPES OF BASTI

- **Decoction.** Make a decoction with one tablespoon of each of powdered herb (Dashamula and Guduchi is a great option for vata or pitta individuals, and Punarnava is an excellent option for kapha individuals) in four cups of water. Boil the water down to two cups. Let it cool and strain the fluid through a cheesecloth.
- **Oil.** Sesame oil is a good option for most people. Ashwagandha Bala oil is also used for nourishing and building.

There are many other varieties of basti. Please consult with a qualified Ayurvedic practitioner to see which one is right for you.

AVOID IF

- You are pregnant or if you are menstruating.
- If you have diarrhea, have hemorrhoids, or have rectal bleeding.
- If you are extremely weak or debilitated.



Dashamula powder

Punarnava powder

Guduchi powder

The information on this handout is for educational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. For more information pertaining to your personal needs, please see a qualified health practitioner.