

Constipation

Signs of constipation

- Not many bowel movements
- Painful bowel movements
- Hard bowel movements
- Hard to pass bowel movements
- Very large bowel movements
- Blood with bowel movements
- Soiled underwear
- Abdominal (stomach) pain
- Swollen abdomen
- Irritability or an unexplained change in behaviour
- Poor appetite
- More frequent heartburn (“acid indigestion”)

Common causes

- Low-fibre diet
- Changes with what your child eats
- Holding on or refusal to have bowel movements
- Painful bowel movements
- Medications such as codeine
- Traveling or change of routine
- Eating large amounts of cheese and milk products
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Feeding or swallowing difficulties
- Excess sweating
- Poor muscle tone

Goals of the treatment plan

- Empty the bowels. This will get rid of the abdominal pain that often happens with constipation.
- Soften the stools. Softer stools will help your child have easier and less painful bowel movements.
- Keep your child free from soiling his or her underwear.
- Help you and your child cope with any problems that you may be having because of the constipation.
- Replace the use of laxatives with a high fibre diet.
- If your child has been used to a regular pattern of toileting (behavioural approach), aim to get back into this pattern as soon as possible.

Treatment

1. Clean out phase.
2. Maintenance phase and high fibre diet.
3. Decreasing the medication and continue with high fibre diet.

Laxatives

A natural laxative helps the muscle of the bowel work. You may be concerned about using laxatives for a long period of time. As part of the successful treatment for constipation the use of laxatives is not harmful. Your doctor or nurse will closely watch your child.

Your child will be on one or more of these medications. **It is very important that your child takes the medications as directed by your doctor.**

Laxatives	PEG 3350	
	Dulcolax	
	Senokot	
	Lactulose	
Lubricants	Mineral Oil	
	Lansoyl	
Stool Softener	Colace	
Enema		

Support

Your nurse can support you and your child, and help you deal with your child's constipation. Please call the nurse if you have any questions or concerns

Nurse: _____ Telephone 905-521-2100, ext. _____

Doctor: _____

For appointments call 905-521-2100, ext. _____