

# Bladder and Bowel Service

## Constipation in Children

# Constipation in children

Constipation is when your child has two or more of the following:

- Two or less bowel movements a week
- History of excessive stool withholding
- History of painful or hard bowel movement
- History of large diameter bowel movement (toilet blocker)
- Presence of large faecal mass in the rectum
- At least one episode of faecal incontinence once child has achieved toilet training skills

Other symptoms of constipation can also include:

- Overflow soiling which can be very smelly, thick and sticky or dry and flaky
- Bowel movements without sensation.
- Passing rabbit droppings (Type 1 Bristol Stool Chart)
- Distress when passing a bowel movement
- Straining to pass a bowel movement
- Bleeding with hard bowel movement
- Poor appetite that improves with bowel movement
- Abdominal pain with passing a bowel movement
- Anal pain when passing a bowel movement
- Posturing such as straight legged, tiptoes, back arching when needing to pass stool

## Treatment

### **Osmotic laxative -Movicol / Macrogol medication**

The sachet of medication is mixed with water which moves through the child's gut without being absorbed into their body so stays in their bowel. This makes bowel movement softer and easier to pass. This medication can take three days to take effect. This medication is required to be reviewed every three months

### **Stimulant medication—Sodium Picosulphate /Senna**

This medication works by encouraging the muscles in your child's bowel to move waste products through their bowel. It can take 6–12 hours to take effect. This medication is required to be reviewed every three months.

# Self Help

## Increase fibre in your child's diet

- High fibre breakfast cereals, wholemeal bread, pasta and rice, wheat biscuits
- 2 portions of fruit a day
- 3 portions of vegetables a day
- Beans and pulses

## Increase your child's fluid intake

Total fluid intake per day:

- 0-6 months 700mls
- 7-12 months 800mls
- 1-3 year old 1300mls
- 4-8 year old 1400mls
- 9-13 year old 2100mls
- 14-18 year old 2500mls

Drink 6-7 drinks daily of water, squashes etc., evenly spaced throughout the waking day.

Total of milk, yogurts and cheeses to exceed no more than 500mls a day.

If your child is not keen on drinking remember that soups, jellies, custard and gravy can all add fluid to their body.

## Increase your child activity level if able

Daily physical activity that is tailored to your child's stage of development and individual ability

## Further Information

Seek further advice from your child's GP to discuss medication and treatment as they may need to take medication for 12 months or longer.

Your child Health Visitor/ School Nurse can give additional advice around diet, fluid intake and toileting routines.

## Book your child GP appointment

## References:

NICE Guidance cg99 2010 Constipation in children and young people (updated 2019)

ROME IV - Pediatric Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders 2016

## Useful websites

[www.bladderandboweluk.co.uk](http://www.bladderandboweluk.co.uk)

[www.eric.org.uk](http://www.eric.org.uk)

[www.thepoonurses.uk](http://www.thepoonurses.uk)

<https://gikids.org/constipation>

### Children's Bladder and Bowel Service

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In order to assist us to improve the services available, your information may be used for clinical audit, research, teaching and anonymised for National NHS Reviews. Further information is available in the leaflet Disclosure of Confidential Information IL137, via Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust website or the PALS Service.

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