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CONSTIPATION - Parent Information Sheet

Constipation is common in children. Most of the time, constipation is due to a diet that doesn't include enough water and dietary fiber. A child is considered constipated if there is a pain during the passage of a stool (bowel movement or BM) or the child has less than three bowel movements per week.

Constipation is preventable and most cases can be resolved with health eating and exercise habits. Children who eat a diet high in fats and processed sugars are constipated more often. Occasionally medications used to treat iron deficiencies or depression can lead to constipation. In babies, constipation can occur with the transition from breast milk to formula or from baby foods to solid food.

It is important to keep in mind that children tend to avoid going to the bathroom, even when they feel the urge to go. They might ignore internal cues because they don't want to stop playing, they don't want to use a restroom away from home, or they have to ask an adult to be excused to go to the restroom. When children ignore the urge to go, it becomes more difficult to go later on.

Symptoms of Constipation: Remember that different children have different bathroom habits. A child might have a bowel movement three times per day while another might go once every three days. A child is constipated when he or she is going less than usual. Your child might complain of a stomach ache, of feeling full, of feeling bloated, or say it hurts to have a bowel movement, or that there is a little blood on the toilet paper after straining to have a bowel movement.

Dealing with Constipation:

Part I: BOWEL CLEAN-OUT PROTOCOL

Goal is COMPLETE evacuation of formed stool

Age group	Miralax	Senokot	Dulcolax	Frequency
6 months - 2 yrs	1 tsp. for each 6 months up to 3 tsp.	1 tsp.		Every 12 hrs. (start at night) x 3 pm/am/pm
2 yrs – 5 yrs	1 capful	2 tsp.		Every 12 hrs. (start at night) x 3 pm/am/pm
6 yrs – 10 yrs	1 capful	3 tsp. (for kids who can swallow pills)	OR 1 tab	Every 12 hrs.(start at night) x 3 pm/am/pm
10 yrs and older	1 capful	1 1/2 Tabs (for kids who can swallow pills)	OR 2 tabs	Every 12 hrs. (start at night x 3 pm/am/pm

Miralax, Senokot and Dulcolax are available without a prescription. You can find them on the laxative shelf.

Part 2: MAINTENANCE - MIRALAX

Goal of 2 mushy stools per day. Will remain on maintenance for several months.

Call your physician's office before discontinuing use.

6 months – 2 years	2 tsp. in the pm
2 – 5 years	¾ capful twice daily
6 - 10 years	1 capful twice daily
10 years and older	2 capfuls twice daily

MAINTENANCE – MINERAL OIL

Helpful for kids having trouble with stool withholding or having large painful stools.

<12 months	NONE
1 – 2 YEARS	1 ½ tsp. twice daily
2 – 5 years	2 tsp. twice daily
6 – 10 years	1 Tabs twice daily
10 years and older	2 Tabs twice daily

Part 3: HABITS

Goal of discontinuing the maintenance medications by developing good daily bowel habits and diet.

1. Develop daily routine for toileting:

- A. Wake up, get ready for school, eat breakfast and sit on toilet for 5–10 minutes (timed).
- B. Toilet sessions should be established twice a day – morning and evening. Preferably after meals.
- C. Session on toilet should be TIMED. 5-10 minutes should be encouraged even if the child doesn't feel like going
- D. Keep a calendar to track bowel movements.
- E. Regular mealtimes need to be established.
DO NOT snack between meals.
- F. Establish a daily exercise routine.

2. Diet

- A. Eat a diet high in fiber. Refer to chart below.
- B. Drink lots of liquid. See chart.
- C. No caffeine! It robs your body of water.

3. Follow-up

Make a follow-up visit in 6 – 8 weeks.

FLUID AND FIBER REQUIREMENTS FOR AGE

Fluid:	1 - 3 years	4-6 cups daily (32-48 oz.)
	4 - 6 years	6-8 cups daily (48-64 oz.)
	7 years and older	7-11 cups daily (56-88 oz.)

Fiber:

5 GRAMS OF FIBER + AGE OF CHILD = GRAMS OF FIBER/DAY

(Example: 15 grams of fiber for a 10 year old)

Use this formula until the child reaches 25/30 grams/day (ADULT AMOUNT)