

Bowel Training Sheet for Children with Constipation or Encopresis

Constipation: When a child does not have a bowel movement on a regular basis, which can lead to abdominal discomfort and painful bowel movements. Constipation can be characterized as hard stool that causes pain when passed, then causing the child to not completely empty their bowels. Retained stool then worsens the constipation and can distend the colon, causing some children to lose the sensation to have a bowel movement.

Encopresis: When a child cannot control the timing of a bowel movement and this lack of control causes accidents in unwanted places and times. It is common for children with constipation to have problems with soiling their underpants.

Dietary Recommendations:

1. Increase daily intake of raw vegetables and fruits.
2. Limit dairy products (i.e. milk, cheese, yogurt).
3. Use whole wheat breads.
4. Encourage fruit juices (especially pear or prune) - 16 oz/day minimum.
5. Try Metamucil cookies to increase fiber intake.
6. Limit foods that are fried or high in fat (e.g. peanut butter, French fries, potato chips).
7. Increase water intake to 32-64 ounces per day (not for infants).

Over-the-Counter Medicine:

☐ **Milk of magnesia:** _____ mL (2 mL/kg) once or _____ mL (1 mL/kg) twice a day. May mix with flavoring syrup.

-Goal: 1-2 soft bowel movements per day.

-Do not use in children less than 6 months!

-Continue medication for 6 months, to encourage a normal toileting routine.

-May decrease the medication to half the above dose, if stools are too loose.

☐ **Mineral oil:** _____ mL (2 mL/kg) once or _____ mL (1 mL/kg) twice a day. May mix with juice.

-Goal: 1-2 soft bowel movements per day.

-Do not use in children less than 12 months!

-Continue medication for 6 months, to encourage a normal toileting routine.

-May decrease the medication to half the above dose, if stools are too loose.

☐ **Karo syrup or Malt soup extract:** 5-10 mL in 2-4 ounces of water or fruit juice once or twice a day for breastfed infants.

-5-10 mL in formula every 2nd feeding for formula fed infants; no more than 30 mL per day.

-15-30 mL in 8 ounces of liquid once or twice a day for children over the age of 12 months.

☐ **Glycerin suppository:** Take 1 children's suppository by rectum once a day as needed for interim constipation - use rarely, unless recommended by your child's provider.

Timed Toileting: Child needs to attempt to have a bowel movement twice a day until constipation has resolved. Then, once a day is satisfactory. Give medication prior to breakfast and dinner, then place child on toilet after these meals. It is best to try after a hot meal. Do not let child remain on toilet for more than 30 minutes (to avoid skin breakdown).