

Child Constipation Information



Your child has been referred to the Community Children's Nursing Team as they are suffering from constipation.

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Constipation is a distressing condition and we don't always know why this occurs, reasons can include putting off going to the toilet, poor fluid intake and not sitting on the toilet for long enough. Sometimes soiling can happen, this is because the bowel is full of poo, over time the amount of poo gets bigger and harder stretching the bowel. The large bits of poo wedge open the bottom which allows the liquid poo to escape.

Unfortunately there is currently a waiting list for this service but there are interventions that you can make a start with before your appointment.

Bowel and Bladder information:

The bowel and bladder are closely related and we need your child to have a good bladder. A good fluid intake is vital for a healthy bladder.

Below is the recommended fluid intake for each age group:

- 4-8 years- girls and boys 1000-1400mls per day
- 9-13 years- girls 1200-2100mls per day, boys 1400-2100mls per day
- 14-18 years- girl's 1400-2500mls per day, boys 2100mls- 3200mls per day

Ref: NICE (2010) Nocturnal enuresis: The management of bedwetting in children and young people.

The above is the amount that we need your child to be drinking. This is water based fluids and milk is not included in the amount but your child can have this in addition. They need to drink the majority of this fluid before 5pm. Please can you ensure that they are drinking the recommended amount when you and your child come to your clinic appointment.

Please encourage your child by using reward charts and making it fun, such as measuring the amount each day so that they know how much they need to drink. Encourage them to eat more fruit and vegetables and increase their fibre intake which includes: brown bread, oats and beans.



Prescribed medication:

If your child has been prescribed medication it is important that this is taken as directed. Have a look at the medication packet and information sheet it will tell you how much water is needed to mix the sachet. It is very important that you follow this and add the water accurately for it to work effectively. If medication is not flavoured a small amount of cordial can be added to disguise the taste.

Toilet advice:








Encourage your child to go to the toilet regularly throughout the day (every 3-4 hours) and encourage them to sit on the toilet twenty minutes after meals. They need to sit on the toilet for about 5-10 minutes, encourage them to relax and push the poo out.

It is important that they have a good position on the toilet, use a stool so that their feet are flat on the floor. They need to feel safe while sat on the toilet. The best position is for their knees to be bent and be higher than their hips. Stay with them while they are on the toilet and get them to concentrate on what they are doing. Blowing bubbles/ windmills/ blowing apps can help with bowel movements. Keep a record of when your child is successfully opening their bowel and what the poo is like. The Bristol Stool Chart shown below can be used as an indicator to describe how smelly it is, the colour and the consistency.

Bristol Stool Chart

If it takes time to treat constipation, please be prepared for it to be a messy process as we do need to clear out your child's bowel. We are working towards your child having a type 4 soft stool and opening their bowel between 3 times a day to 3 times per week as shown on the Bristol Stool Chart below.

Bristol Stool Chart

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on the surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces. Entirely Liquid

Support Groups:

www.disabledliving.co.uk

www.childhoodconstipation.com

We look forward to seeing you and your child at your appointment where we will discuss a treatment plan.

Contact us

This factsheet has been produced by the Children's Community Nursing service.

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Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback, which helps us to improve our services. If you have any comments, compliments or complaints to make about your care, please contact the Patient Experience Team.

Email: PET@cumbria.nhs.uk Tel: 01228 602128 Freephone: 0800 633 554

If you would like this factsheet in another language or format, for example Braille, large print or audio, please call:

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ID: CH103

Version: 1

Issue date: April 2017

Review date: April 2019

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