**Constipation Pathway**

**Emergency Department**

**Diagnostic Criteria**
At least 2 criteria present (symptoms present for at least 1 month):
- ≤ 2 defecations per week
- At least 1 episode of incontinence per week after the acquisition of toileting skills
- History of excessive stool retention
- History of painful or hard bowel movements
- History of large-diameter stools that may obstruct the toilet

**Inclusion Criteria:**
≥ 6 months of age

**Exclusion Criteria:**
< 6 months of age
Neurogenic Bowel
Spinal Cord injury
Neuromuscular weakness
Hirschsprung disease
Inflammatory bowel disease
Cystic Fibrosis
Ostomy
Cecostomy/Jejunostomy tube
Intestinal failure/Short Gut
Abnormalities of the pelvic floor

**Special Considerations**
*Use with caution*
Anorexia
Failure to Thrive/Malnutrition

---

**Consider Disimpaction**
(Digital exam/Xray not necessary for diagnosis)

- **Age 6 month to 2 years:**
  - 1 glycerin suppository or saline enema 10mL/kg/dose, max 300mL

- **Ages 2-12 years old OR <25kg**
  - Pediatric enema
    - 2-12 years old AND >25kg:
      - Use 2 pediatric enemas for total of 133mL
    - Age >12 years old OR >25kg:
      - Use adult enema dosing

---

**Was disimpaction successful?**

- **Yes:**
  - Discharge with MiraLAX cleanout* instructions
  - Begin maintenance therapy after cleanout
  - Follow up with PCP/GI as indicated

- **No:**
  - Consider repeating enema x1, x-rays, admission or further workup

---

**Consider other diagnosis and manage off pathway**

---

**Do they have any Red Flags?**
- Peritoneal signs
- Hematemesis
- Hematochezia
- Bilious emesis
- Hemodynamic instability

---

**Do they have any Red Flags?**

- **Yes**
  - Consider other diagnosis and manage off pathway

- **No**
  - Is patient having significant discomfort?

---

**Is patient having significant discomfort?**

- **Yes**
  - Consider disimpaction

- **No**
  - **Yes**
  - Consider other diagnosis and manage off pathway

---

**MDCalc Child Functional Constipation**
**MDCalc Infant Functional Constipation**

**Disclaimer:** Pathways are intended as a guide for practitioners and do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment nor serve as a standard of medical care. These pathways should be adapted by medical providers, when indicated, based on their professional judgement and taking into account individual patient and family circumstances.

ChildrensNebraska.org/Pathways

Updated 09/2022
**Constipation Pathway**

**Emergency Department**

---

**Bowel Clean-Out Regimen**

**Start with one osmotic agent and one stimulant agent**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laxative agents</th>
<th>1-2 years</th>
<th>2-4 years</th>
<th>5-10 years</th>
<th>10+ years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stimulant Agents</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senna (Senakot/Ex-lax)</td>
<td>7.5 mg Tw ice a day</td>
<td>15 mg Tw ice a day</td>
<td>22.5 mg Tw ice a day</td>
<td>30 mg Tw ice a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisacodyl (Dulcolax)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>5 mg (Only tablet available) Once daily</td>
<td>5 mg Once daily</td>
<td>10 mg Once daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Osmotic Agents</strong></td>
<td>Once daily over 4-8 h</td>
<td>Once daily over 4-8 h</td>
<td>Once daily over 4-8 h</td>
<td>Once daily over 4-8 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEG 3350 (Miralax)</td>
<td>42.5g (2.5 capfuls) in 16 oz of fluid</td>
<td>68g (4 capfuls) in 20 oz of fluid</td>
<td>119g (7 capfuls) in 32 oz of fluid</td>
<td>238g (14 capfuls) in 64 oz of fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnesium citrate</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2-4 oz (1oz per age) plus 8-16 oz additional fluids</td>
<td>5-10 oz (1oz per age); plus 16-24oz additional fluids</td>
<td>10 oz plus 24-32 oz additional fluid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Maintenance Regimens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laxative options</th>
<th>Dose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Osmotic agents</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lactulose</td>
<td>1-2 g/kg/day (1.5-3 ml/kg/day) div 1-2 times a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEG 3350</td>
<td>0.2 to 0.8 g/kg/day (4-8 oz fluid per 17 gm)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk of Magnesia</td>
<td>2-5 yrs: 0.4-1.2 g/day 6-11 yrs: 1.2-2.4 g/day 12-18 yrs: 2.4-4.8 g/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stimulant agents</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senna</td>
<td>2-6 yrs: 2.5-5 mg/day 6-12 yrs: 7.5-10 mg/day &gt;12 yrs: 15-20 mg/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisacodyl</td>
<td>3-10 yrs: 5 mg/day &gt;10 yrs: 5-10 mg/day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Enema Regimens**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enema options</th>
<th>Dose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sodium Phosphate (e.g. Fleet) (First line)</td>
<td>2-18 yrs: 2.5 ml/kg, max 133 ml /dose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisacodyl</td>
<td>2-10 yrs: 5 mg once a day 10 yrs: 5-10 mg once a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NaCl</td>
<td>Neonate &lt;1 kg: 5 ml, &gt;1 kg: 10 ml &gt;1 yr 6 ml/kg 1-2 times a day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mineral oil</td>
<td>2-11 yrs: 30-60 ml once a day &gt;11 yrs: 60-150 ml once a day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


---

**Disclaimer:** Pathways are intended as a guide for practitioners and do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment nor serve as a standard of medical care. These pathways should be adapted by medical providers, when indicated, based on their professional judgement and taking into account individual patient and family circumstances.

ChildrensNebraska.org/Pathways

Updated 09/2022