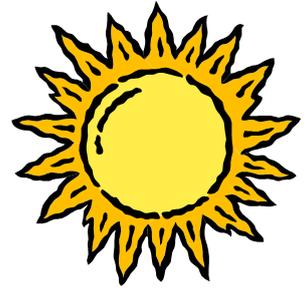


CONSTIPATION WITH OVERFLOW SOILING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS



Constipation with overflow is the term applied to the condition in those children who soil as a consequence of their bowel being partially blocked by faeces.

Prolonged constipation dilates the bowel and affects normal sensation and reflex action in the rectum and anus. Some of the stool in the bowel liquefies and bypasses the blockage. Because of the loss of normal control and sensation, this liquid then seeps out without the child knowing.

It is common for children with this problem to pass a formed stool infrequently, if at all, but they pass very loose or watery stool frequently. This usually presents as soiling into clothing.

Many things can cause constipation in children:

- ◆ Poor diet and/or low fluid intake (affects the consistency of stool and its progress through the bowel).
- ◆ Avoidance of passing stools (often a consequence of the fear of pain when passing stool or embarrassment).
- ◆ Medical conditions that affect the bowel.
- ◆ Whatever the cause, the initial treatment and management of constipation is the same.

ADVICE TO PARENTS/CARERS

- Remember that the child is not soiling deliberately.
- Make tackling the problem a joint effort.
- Help the child to keep a diary of diet, fluid intake and bowel activity.
- Make sure that the child has regular well balanced meals (see fibre score).
- Make sure that the child has regular drinks throughout the day (6 -8 full cups / beakers per day).

- Make sure that the child has some physical activity each day.
- Introduce a routine that allows the child to sit on the toilet for 5 minutes after each meal when at home.
- Encourage the child to go to the toilet at regular intervals and to check clothing for soiling and to change pants and clean self when necessary.
- Confide in school nurse and/or teacher to arrange support at school.
- Make sure that the child has in their schoolbag a supply of clean pants, wipes and plastic bags for disposal.
- **DO NOT PRAISE THE CHILD FOR HAVING CLEAN PANTS** but reward their compliance to the bowel management routine with lots of praise.
- Ignore non-compliance but persist with the supervised routine.
- If the child complains of pain when passing a motion (doing a poo), consult your doctor.
- If the above advice has not had any beneficial effect after 6-8 weeks, consult your doctor.
- If the child has to take medication to relieve their constipation remember that the problem may seem to get worse before it starts to get better, so keep on with the treatment.

NOTES AND QUESTIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASK:

Ref: A. Buchanan in collaboration with G. Claydon 1992, *Children Who Soil - Treatment and Assessment* John Wiley & Sons