

Psychotropic Induced Constipation Guideline Consumer Sheet

Constipation caused by medication

Some medications can cause constipation (problems with passing a stool). It can be very uncomfortable or painful. If you have constipation, it is important to speak to your GP, doctor or nurse, as it can make you very unwell and can be fatal.

Prevent constipation by:

- > drinking at least 2 litres of water every day
- > exercising for at least 20 minutes every day
- > eating plenty of fibre (like fruit and vegetables) every day
- > using bulk forming or stool softening agents (like Metamucil or psyllium husk) with water every day. Your doctor or pharmacist can give advice about available options.

Check-ups with your GP or nurse







It is common to discuss bowel movements with your General Practitioner (GP) or nurse, particularly if there have been any recent changes.

They may also ask what your stools look like to make sure you are not constipated.

Make sure you have a conversation about your bowel movements at your regular GP visit.

How to describe your bowel movements

The Bristol Stool Scale (below) is widely used to describe bowel movements. If your stool looks like type 1, 2, 6, 7 or if you have concerns, let your GP or nurse know.

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

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Other ways to ease constipation

If your usual routine to keep regular bowel movements is not working, in consultation with your GP, doctor or nurse you can:

	Bowels Not Open					
Recommendations	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6
1 sachet Movicol/Macrogel						
Movicol/Macrogel 1 sachet twice daily						
Docusate & Senna x 2 at night						
Lactulose 15ml daily						
<u>Make an urgent appointment with your doctor</u>						

If you experience any of the following when constipated, seek urgent medical help:

- > pain
- > vomiting
- > diarrhoea (loose stools)
- > blood in stool
- > feeling unwell.

Your notes:

Read the Choice and Medication constipation fact sheet for more information.

For more information

SA Pharmacy Medicines Information Service

Telephone: (08) 8161 7555

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

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