



Information for Parents About

Bowel Management

The urinary system and the bowel system are close together and as a result, a problem with one system may affect the other. Therefore, constipation or fecal retention can cause bladder problems such as urine infections and wetting. It is not uncommon for children to have some degree of constipation. Many parents are surprised to hear that their child may have this problem.

Straining to have a bowel movement or bleeding from the rectum are signs you may expect to see if your child is constipated. Other symptoms include infrequent bowel movements (every 2-3 days), large stools, or hard stools (separate balls of stool).

Although neither you nor your child may be aware of it, a urinary tract problem may be caused, in part by constipation. The colon (large intestine) can fill up with so much stool, that only soft or liquid stool can pass through. This is the reason why children can have loose stools even though they are constipated. In order to help your child's urinary tract (bladder and kidneys) function well, it is important for the bowel system to function well also. There are several things you can do to improve your child's bowel habits.

The first step of the bowel program is to evacuate the hard stool that has accumulated with _____ **for 2 days in a row.** After this is completed, start the daily dose Miralax.

Miralax Instructions

Miralax is a stool softener that increases the frequency of bowel movements by retaining water in the stool. The more Miralax your child takes, the softer his or her stools will be. Miralax does not contain bowel stimulants and therefore it is not likely to cause cramps like other laxatives. This medication is not habit forming. It is not absorbed nor does it prevent the absorption of nutrients. It can be used for as long as it is needed. It comes in powder form, is tasteless, and dissolves easily in most liquids.

The Miralax cap is used to measure the powder. The line marked 17 grams is equivalent to 1 capful.

*You will need a prescription from your physician to obtain Miralax from your pharmacy.

Directions:

Mix the recommended dose (provided by your physician) _____ grams or _____ capful in 8oz. of water, juice, or other non-carbonated drink and stir until Miralax is completely dissolved. Your child will take this medication _____ a day and should result in at least one soft bowel movement daily. You may choose the most convenient time to give the Miralax, but it is best to give it the same time every day.

Increase the dose by $\frac{1}{2}$ the initial dose if your child is not having one soft bowel movement a day, or decrease the dose by $\frac{1}{2}$ the initial dose if the stools are loose (diarrhea consistency).

Miralax does not take effect immediately. It may take 24-48 hours for your child to have a bowel movement. **Do not stop the medication without discussing it with the doctor or nurse.**

Along with increased fluid intake and increased fiber in the diet, regular daily toilet sitting is important. Have your child establish a routine of sitting on the toilet around the same time every day, taking his or her time (about 10-15 minutes) to produce a bowel movement. It is important to provide proper support under the feet and have him or her sit with the legs slightly spread apart.

Our goal is for your child to have the best possible function of his or her urinary tract. Healthy bowel habits are an important part of that. Following the bowel program should improve your child's urinary symptoms. You can make this process enjoyable by setting goals and providing rewards. Once your child has established healthy bowel habits, your doctor will discuss the appropriate time to stop the medication. Until then, it is important to **stay on the medication as instructed.** Please contact our office with any questions or concerns.

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