

Constipation

For use by healthcare professionals only



Clinical Assessment/Management tool for Children

Primary and Community Care Settings

Priorities of Clinical Assessment

History	Bristol Stool Chart	Examination	Organic Causes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bowel pattern (open <3 x per week) Bowel consistency - hard or large stools Straining or distress with opening bowels Rabbit dropping/pellet stools Blood in stool Retentive posturing Soiling / Overflow or reported diarrhoea Poor appetite that resolves with opening of bowels History of fissures, urinary symptoms, and prior constipation 		<p>Palpate for faecal mass (not always accurate) this should be re-examined after treatment to ensure resolution</p> <p>Examine anus for position and check patent</p> <p>Examine spine/lower limb neurology/gait</p>	<p>95% is idiopathic and no investigations are required</p> <p>Consider organic causes where failure to respond to standard treatment</p> <p>Hypothyroidism (associated syndromes)</p> <p>Coeliac Disease</p> <p>Hirschsprung (consider if young age of onset and failure to pass meconium in first 2 days of life)</p> <p>Tethered Cord (very rare)</p> <p>Abdominal tumour</p>

Assessment Table

GREEN LOW RISK	AMBER MEDIUM RISK	RED HIGH RISK
<p>No red or amber symptoms</p> <p>95% of constipation is idiopathic and no investigations are required</p>	<p>Growth and Wellbeing: Faltering growth?</p> <p>Other medical conditions: e.g. cerebral palsy, developmental delay</p> <p>Personal/familial/social factors: Can families put in place treatment plan? Safeguarding concerns?</p> <p>No improvement with effective treatment after 3 months</p> <p>Consider organic cause if fails to respond in 3 months - coeliac disease, hypothyroidism, cystic fibrosis (if frequent rectal prolapse)</p>	<p>Symptoms from birth e.g. delayed meconium-consider Hirschsprung disease</p> <p>New/undiagnosed weakness in legs - may indicate tethered cord</p> <p>Abdominal distension with vomiting especially green - possible bowel obstruction or faecal impaction</p> <p>Personal/Family Factors - disclosure/evidence that raises concerns about child maltreatment or neglect</p> <p>New onset constipation in child older than 5 years</p> <p>Ribbon like stools with presence of blood and mucous</p> <p>Lower Limb deformity talipes/contractures/consider alternative diagnosis</p> <p>Abnormal appearance of the spine or sacral region</p>

Action Table

GREEN ACTION	AMBER ACTION	RED ACTION																
<p>Parental Resources:</p> <p>Potty (or toilet) training</p> <p>Children's Bowel Problems</p> <p>ERIC's guide to children's bowel problems</p> <p>Address trigger factors:</p> <p>Fluid intake/Diet/Activity for children aged <5 years</p> <p>Positive praise with rewards</p> <p>School toilets</p> <p>Children with Additional Need</p> <p>Provide family with safety netting sheet</p>	<p>Address trigger factors:</p> <p>Fluid intake/Diet/Activity for children aged <5 years</p> <p>Positive praise with rewards</p> <p>School toilets</p> <p>Children with Additional Needs</p> <p>If palpable large faecal mass or long history, commence Macrogol Disimpaction Regimen</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age</th> <th>Disimpaction Start</th> <th>Maintenance</th> <th>Max Dose</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><5 years</td> <td>2</td> <td>1-4</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5-11 years</td> <td>4</td> <td>1-4</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>12-17 years</td> <td>8</td> <td>2-6</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Please check BNFC</p> <p>If stools soft but remain infrequent add stimulant laxative (e.g. sodium picosulphate)</p> <p>Refer to local continence service or to paediatric outpatients if no improvement with treatment</p>	Age	Disimpaction Start	Maintenance	Max Dose	<5 years	2	1-4	8	5-11 years	4	1-4	8	12-17 years	8	2-6	12	<p>Refer to paediatrics</p> <p>Discuss with local on call team about same day referral</p> <p>If safeguarding concerns refer to social care as per local policy</p>
Age	Disimpaction Start	Maintenance	Max Dose															
<5 years	2	1-4	8															
5-11 years	4	1-4	8															
12-17 years	8	2-6	12															