

PARENT INFORMATION FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF CONSTIPATION IN CHILDREN

Constipation is a common problem which affects many children. A calm and relaxed approach in managing this problem will help both you and your child and decrease the anxiety levels.

FOOD AND DRINK:

Encourage your child to drink plenty of water, dilute fruit juice or sugar free squash drinks. In children who are weaned avoid excessive milk intake. In babies who are not yet weaned give them extra water between their normal feeds.

Encourage your child to eat three meals a day and include fruit and vegetables every day, e.g. plenty of **carrots, peas, beans, broccoli, jacket potatoes etc.** **Fresh fruit, grapes, apples, pears, plums, oranges, peaches and strawberries etc.**

When your child is drinking enough, try including; **'Weetos', 'Shreddies', 'Weetabix' or oatmeal porridge; wholewheat or high-fibre white bread; wholewheat boiled or tinned pasta** in their meal. Never force your child to eat food if they do not want to. If you do it can turn mealtimes into a battleground and your child may start to think of eating as negative and stressful experience.

TOILETING

The best position on the toilet is to sit well back, knees apart and hands on the knees. A foot stool/box should be placed under the child's feet to give them something solid to push against. Use a small toilet seat for a small child.

Encourage your child to sit on potty/toilet 20-40 minutes after eating a meal. Your child should be allowed at least 10 minutes on the toilet/potty.

Whilst sitting on toilet/potty, try encouraging your child to laugh, cough or blow up balloons. All help muscles to relax. Please supervise your child when playing with balloons. Do not give balloons to a child under five years of age.

Give praise for any sitting and ignore tantrums. It is important to be positive and encouraging when it comes to establishing a toilet routine. To encourage a positive routine, make a diary of your child's bowel movements which is linked to a reward system.

MEDICINE

The medicine will make stools soft and also stimulate better contractions of rectum facilitating good bowel functions.

Please give the medicines as prescribed and change the doses as per instructions from the nurse or doctor.

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