



Laxative Information

What are laxatives?

A laxative is a substance that helps you have a bowel movement. Laxatives are used to relieve and prevent constipation, which occurs when it is difficult to have a bowel movement. The goal is for one soft but formed stool each day.

How do laxatives work?

There are four main ways laxatives work:

- **Stool softeners** - soften the stool to make it easier for the child to push out.
- **Bulking agents** - makes the stool bigger which gives the child the urge to have a bowel movement.
- **Osmotic laxatives** - draws fluid into the intestines to make the stool softer and easier to pass.
- **Stimulants** - speeds up the movement of the stool through the intestines.

What laxative product should I use?

Most laxatives are available over-the-counter at your local pharmacy. Your provider will discuss the best option for your child.

Products we recommend:

Miralax® (Glycolax®)

- Miralax® is a product that softens the stool and increases the frequency of bowel movements by retaining the water in the stool. It is a white powder that should be dissolved in a clear liquid such as juice or water. This can be purchased over the counter at your local pharmacy.

- The dose will depend on the age of the child and the degree of constipation. The bottle top is a measuring cap marked to 17 grams (one heaping tablespoon). The dose will range between 1/2 teaspoon to one full capful - 1 to 2 times a day depending on your child's age and size.
- Miralax® can be taken at any time. It is suggested that you take it in the morning. It can be taken on a full or empty stomach.
- A successful treatment program requires time and effort. Miralax® can usually be expected to work in 2 to 4 days. The length of time you will need to use Miralax® will be determined by your doctor.
- Side effects may include cramping or diarrhea. It may be necessary to cut the dose in half or take it every other day. You may call the pediatric surgery nurse to discuss an alternative-dosing plan.

Senekot® (Ex-lax®)

- Senekot® is a natural fiber that is used to treat functional constipation. It is a combination of a stool softener and a stimulant. This can be purchased over the counter at your local pharmacy.
- Senekot® will generally produce a bowel movement in 6-12 hours after taking it.
- Plan your child's dose based on what would work best for their schedule. Examples: Noon dose for evening bowel movement, Bedtime for a morning bowel movement.
- Give the dose at the same time each day to help establish a regular bowel pattern.

When should I call the doctor?

Call us if you have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Vomiting or bloating
- Persistent Constipation /unable to pass bowel movement

What is the contact information?

If you have any question, problems or concerns call the Pediatric Surgery clinic from 8-5:00pm Monday thru Friday, 734-764-4151. After 5:00pm or on the weekends if you have urgent issues call hospital paging at 734 936-4000 and ask the operator to page the Pediatric Surgeon “on call”.

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