

**Clinical Guideline:** Constipation Site: FPH

Cause depends on age:

* Babies inadequate fluid intake or intolerances
* Toddlers inadequate fluids and faddy eaters leads to anal phobia and holding on
* Older children ‘anal phobia’ care can lead to mega rectum
* School age hold on as life too interesting and only use toilets at home

History

Treatment depends on cause:

* Fluids and clever use of fruit & veg smoothies
* Lactulose 10mls tds
* Movicol 4 sachets a day (use if hard stool)
* Senna (if anal phobia) am od only 5mls initially up to 20mls
* Picosulphate (if refuse senna) 2.5mls to 10mls od

If >5 days no bowel movement clear out with movicol up to 8 sachets in one go.

* Teach parents to alter dosing by response (2 day interval), to keep records.
* Use reward systems - tailor to the child
* Aim for 3 stools per week without fuss.

One good bowel movement doesn’t indicate the end of the problem, tell parents about the bowel returning to normal function.

Advice and Treatment

**Consider Referral if:**

Failure to respond

Referral Guidelines – red flag signs

Investigation

Palpate for descending colon, however may not be palpable if:

* Used stool softeners
* Mega rectum (sits in pelvis but will have soiling or very large stools)

Examination

Use the Bristol Stool chart to show parents what is normal and what is not.

General Information