

Constipation Management Guide

Johns Hopkins Pediatric Gastroenterology Constipation Management Guide

Constipation means having fewer bowel movements (poops) than usual, and/or having dry, hard, or difficult-to-pass poops. "Chronic" means your child has been constipated for a long time (**3 or more months**). When someone has chronic constipation, the poop fills up and stretches out the colon and rectum (parts of the intestines). This makes it hard for the intestines to work normally. Treatment begins with "cleaning out" the intestines and starting medicines to help poop pass easily.

Instructions for Bowel Cleanse:

1. Choose a day to complete the bowel cleanse when you and your child can stay home, close to a bathroom all day. For this whole day, your child must be on a clear liquid diet (clear liquid diet handout attached). Passing the volume (and loose consistency) of stool required to clean out your colon can cause dehydration, so be sure your child drinks lots of clear liquids, in addition to the Miralax[®] containing liquids, during the day.
2. As soon as your child wakes up, they should take the stimulant laxative (either ExLax[®] Chocolate Squares or Bisacodyl) indicated on the dosing page to follow, with 8 ounces of liquid.
3. Next, your child should begin drinking their recommended amount of Miralax[®] (precise amount on dosing page). Miralax[®] should be mixed with water or another clear and uncarbonated liquid. When your child starts drinking this dose, set a timer for 2 hours, as your child needs to drink the entire amount in 2 hours for the Miralax[®] to work well.
4. Once your child has finished this first, large amount of Miralax[®] (ideally by the time your 2-hour timer goes off) set a new timer for 4 hours. For these 4 hours, you are waiting and watching your child's stool output, which should gradually become thinner/looser/clearer.
5. If, by the time your 4-hour timer goes off, your child either has not passed any stool or is still passing formed or thick stool, they will need to start taking hourly, doses of Miralax[®]. These hourly doses are 1 capful (17g) of Miralax[®] mixed in 6-8oz clear liquid and should be consumed in less than 30 minutes.
6. Your child should continue to take these hourly doses until they have passed 3 clear stools – stool that looks like very dark urine, with little to no sand-like sediment.
7. Your child has successfully completed the bowel cleanse at this point – once they have passed 3 clear stools in a row. The benchmark for completion is 3 clear stools in a row, because sometimes liquid stool will flow around older, harder, retained stool material and after having 1 liquid stool your child may then pass more formed stool.

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Medication Doses for Bowel Clean Out:

Your child's weight is (HEIGHTWEIGHTLASTREADING) kilograms (kg).

** Ex-Lax[®] Chocolate and Dulcolax[®] are **stimulant laxatives**, they help the muscles of the colon squeeze out the stool**

** Miralax[®] is an **osmotic laxative/stool softener**, it makes your body put more water into the colon, making stool softer**

____ 8 to 10kg: No Ex-Lax[®] Chocolate or Dulcolax[®]
Mix 2.5 capfuls of Miralax[®] in 1 cup (8oz) of clear drink or water.

____ 10.1 to 15kg: ½ square of Ex-Lax[®] Chocolate
Mix 3.5 capfuls of Miralax[®] in 2 cups (16oz) of clear drink or water.

____ 15.1 to 20kg: 1 square of Ex-Lax[®] Chocolate
Mix 5 capfuls of Miralax[®] in 2.5 cups (20oz) of clear drink or water.

____ 20.1 to 25kg: 1 ½ squares of Ex-Lax[®] Chocolate
Mix 6 capfuls of Miralax[®] in 3 cups (24oz) of clear drink or water.

____ 25.1 to 30kg: 1 ½ squares of Ex-Lax[®] Chocolate
Mix 7 capfuls of Miralax[®] in 3.5 cups (28oz) of clear drink or water.

____ 30.1 to 40kg: 5mg (1 tablet) Bisacodyl laxative
Mix 9.5 capfuls of Miralax[®] in 5 cups (40oz) of clear drink or water.

____ 40.1 to 50kg: 5mg (1 tablet) Bisacodyl laxative
Mix 12 capfuls of Miralax[®] in 6 cups (48oz) of clear drink or water.

____ 50.1kg or more: 10mg (2 tablets) Bisacodyl laxative
Mix 14 capfuls of Miralax[®] in 7 cups (56oz) of clear drink or water.

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DARK AND MURKY	BROWN AND MURKY	DARK ORANGE AND SEMI-CLEAR	LIGHT ORANGE AND MOSTLY CLEAR	YELLOW AND CLEAR
NOT READY	NOT READY	NOT READY	ALMOST READY	READY

Constipation Maintenance Management - medications and behaviors

The day after your child's colon cleanse, they should begin taking daily maintenance Miralax® for continued management of constipation.

Please give your child ____ capful(s) of Miralax® mixed in ____ ounces of clear, uncarbonated drink or water ____ time(s) a day. Your child's entire dose of Miralax® must be finished in less than 30 minutes for optimal effectiveness. Please make sure that your child takes their **Miralax® daily**, Miralax® does not work as well when used on an "as needed" basis. The best time to give Miralax® is after school but before dinner. Miralax® should not be given right before bedtime.

The **GOAL** of daily maintenance Miralax® is for your child to have **1 or 2 soft and easily passable, substantial bowel movements (Bristol type 4-5) every day**. If this goal is NOT being achieved, you should increase the daily Miralax® dose by ____ capful every 7 days up to a max of ____ capfuls until the goal is achieved. If you feel that your child's stool pattern is still not meeting the goal, please send your GI provider a MyChart message.

In addition to taking their daily Miralax® it is very important for your child to sit on the toilet after every meal and whenever they feel the need to stool. Please make sure that your child uses the toilets in school and does not try to hold in his/her stool. You may want to talk to your child's school nurse to allow them access to a more private bathroom during the school day.

After the intestines are working normally, your child can stop taking the laxative medicines slowly, over a few weeks to months. This weaning process should be done in collaboration with your child's provider.