

CONSTIPATION

Level II

Skill Level: RN

Definition: Difficult evacuation of feces that are unduly hard and dry; sluggish action of bowels.

MODERATE	
<p>Subjective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May complain of inability to have bowel movement over past few days, feeling of fullness, abdominal distention (bloating).• Milk of Magnesia not effective.	<p>Assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alteration in Bowel Elimination: Constipation
<p>Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No change in vital signs.• Bowel tones may be hypoactive, or normal.• Abdomen may be firm or slightly distended.• No local abdominal tenderness or guarding.	<p>Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide Level I treatment plan plus: <p>At nursing discretion may use any of the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Milk of Magnesia 15-30 cc BID x 2 days.• Dulcolax 10 mg QD/prn for 2 days.• May add Fleet's enema x 1.• Increase fluid to at least 12 glasses a day.• Follow up with practitioner if no relief.• Notify practitioner if any abnormal, severe abdominal pain or impaction suspected.• Consider provider visit if current episode resolves but patient has had more than one episode in three months.

Constipation - Level II

SEVERE	
Subjective: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• May complain of constipation 6 days or more.• Pain may be sudden and paroxysmal or continuous.• May be vomiting fecal smelling material.• May complain of severe bloating, anorexia, nausea, weakness.	Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alteration in Bowel Elimination: Constipation, possibly related to obstruction of bowel associated with underlying disease process.
Objective: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blood pressure may be elevated or decreased, respirations increased, pulse increased, temperature elevated or normal.• Bowel sounds absent or increased, or abnormal.• Abdomen may be distended and firm. Note any rigidity or rebound tenderness.• Pain, nausea/vomiting or diarrhea may be present.	Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If patient has severe constipation not responding to medical therapy, but has no severe abdominal pain or abnormal vital signs, refer to provider first available time.• If patient with abdominal pain or abnormal vital signs, call for provider for further advice.• If patient in shock or appears critically ill, apply EMERGENCY protocol.

Nursing Education:

1. New onset constipation problems in patients over age 50 may be indicative of lower colon obstruction by a mass or tumor.
2. Evaluate and consider fluid intake, dietary factors, and medication use which may be contributing to constipation.

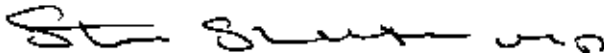
APPROVED:

Medical Services Manager

Date

Chief Medical Officer

Date



Medical Director

5/5/09
Date

Date Effective May 2009

Revised: April 2009