

## **Children's Emergency Department (CHED) Constipation Discharge Information Leaflet**

Your child has been seen in the Emergency Department and the clinician has assessed that your child may be safely treated at home.

This leaflet is to advise you about how to manage your child's illness and to help you decide where and when to get further advice or assessment if needed.

### **Constipation in Children**

Constipation is a common problem affecting about 1 in 3 children. It commonly starts around the potty-training stage. The symptoms can be tricky to spot and can present as:

- Abdominal (tummy) pain.
- Doing fewer than 4 poos in a week. Ideally, children should pass some soft poo every day, or at least every other day.
- Pooing more than 3 times a day. This can show that their bowel is full, and poo is leaking out a bit at a time. It might be hard bits of poo, soft or even liquid poo called overflow.
- Poo that looks like little pellets or rabbit droppings.
- Big poos, or lots of poo all at once.
- Pain when they poo and needing to strain. There may even be some bleeding when they poo. Hard, large poos can cause a small tear in the bottom.
- Having a swollen, painful tummy. They might not feel like eating, or even feel sick.
- Smelly poo, wind, and bad breath.
- Bladder problems such as doing lots of small wees, needing to wee urgently, bedwetting and urinary tract infections.

Constipation can happen to any child and doesn't usually have a cause. These things can be factors in developing constipation:

- Not eating enough high-fibre foods like fruit and vegetables.
- Not drinking enough.
- Having problems with potty (toilet) training.
- Being worried about something.

### **How can I help my child with constipation?**

- Encouraging your child to drink more (approximately 6-8 water based drinks a day)
- Include 5 portions of fruit or vegetables a day in their diet.
- Encourage them to follow a regular toilet routine: sitting on the toilet or potty after every meal and using a footstool to support their feet.

- Give them plenty of opportunities to exercise and move around.
- Giving regular laxative medication as prescribed. Constipation in children usually required daily treatment with prescribed medication for several months. You will need to see your GP for a review within a few days of being discharged from the Emergency Department. Your GP can ensure that your child is getting the right treatment for them.

More advice can be found at <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well>

**Signs that would require you to consult a doctor urgently or return to the Emergency Department if your child becomes seriously unwell.**

- Having severe abdominal pain especially if in the right side of the lower abdomen.
- Blood mixed in with their poo.

**Most problems related to constipation in children are best managed by the General Practice team. If your child is not seriously unwell, your GP surgery or 111 should be your usual place to get advice.**

We aim to provide the best care for every patient. So, we would like your feedback on the quality of the care you have received from the Hospital. Please visit <http://ratenhs.uk/IQu9vx> Or scan QR code:

