



PATIENT AND FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

Bowel Management Plan

What is a *bowel management plan*?

- A bowel management plan is a mix of diet, medicines, behavioral modification programs, physical therapy and/or enemas to help your child poop every day.
- It is an individualized plan to prevent your child from having constipation symptoms or poop accidents.

How do I know if my child needs a bowel management plan?

- If your child is younger than potty-training age but is not having regular bowel movements or is experiencing unwanted symptoms.
- If your child has not been able to potty-train by the time their peers are out of diapers, usually by 3-5 years of age.

In either of these situations, it is recommended to set up a bowel management plan with your health care team.

Here are some of the symptoms your child may have:

- Tummy pain or bloating
- Feeling sick to their stomach or vomiting
- Constipation
- Daily pooping accidents (after potty-training age)
- Severe diaper rash
- Rectum protruding or poking out (rectal prolapse)
- Chronic diarrhea



How is a bowel management plan decided?

What happens prior to bowel management?

- Your child's medical team will review your child's past medical and surgical history. This will include any testing or treatment your child has had to help them with these problems.
 - e.g. diet, medicines, enemas, etc.
- Your child's medical team will decide if any more testing is needed to see the condition of the intestines
 - e.g. X-ray studies

What happens during bowel management?

- You and your child's medical team will figure out the goals for your child's program and the best way to get started.
- There will need to be close monitoring of your child's bowel (pooping) pattern and symptoms.
 - Your child's medical team will discuss with you how this will be monitored.
 - Many times, changes will need to be made to the bowel management plan after the medical team sees how your child responds to the plan.

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What conditions might need bowel management?

- Anorectal malformations/imperforate anus
- Hirschsprung disease
- Fecal incontinence
- Idiopathic constipation
- Rectal prolapse
- Fistula in ano
- Cloacal exstrophy
- Neurogenic bowel
- Spinal cord abnormalities (e.g. Neural tube defects)
- Spinal cord injury



Is bowel management long-term?

- The goals for your child's bowel management plan will determine how long they will be on the plan.
- Many children with bowel problems may need a bowel management plan for a long time.
- Each child will need a plan designed just for them. There is no "cookbook recipe" that works for every child.
- Any plan will take time and effort by the entire family.
- Your child's medical diagnosis will often predict how long they will need to be on a bowel management plan.

What do I need to know to be successful?

- Understand that bowel management is a fact of life.
 - You and your child are making the best decision to improve their quality of life.
- When talking to your child about bowel management, find words and phrases that make sense to them.
- Be positive! Remind your child that bowel management means:
 - Going to school, going to sleepovers, or playing sports without worrying about poop accidents.
 - Getting to wear big kid underwear.
- Let your child help by giving them simple tasks such as letting them pick out a fun activity to do while sitting on the toilet.
 - This gives them some control and ownership.
- Be consistent. Make it part of your normal daily routine.
 - Give medicines at the same time every day.
 - Follow instructions for dietary guidelines.
- Make it fun!
- Stay in contact with your medical team.
 - Changes are often needed as your child grows and their needs change.



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Typical concerns with bowel management

Will my child become addicted to laxatives or enema?

No- Your child was born with a condition that needs the help of enemas and/or laxatives to properly empty the colon. This does not mean your child is addicted to a needed treatment.

Are enemas and laxatives safe?

Yes- If used properly and under the guidance of your medical team. All medicines can have risks and side effects and should be discussed with your medical team.

Do daily enemas or laxatives interfere with nutrition?

No- Enemas and laxatives empty stool (solid waste) from the colon (large bowel) only. They do not empty anything from the small bowel, which is where the body absorbs nutrients.

When should I call the office?

If your child has any of the following, please call our office:

- No poop in the time frame given to you by their medical team.
- Hard stool or straining with bowel movements.
- Diarrhea or small frequent smearing or streaks of stool in their underwear.
- Vomiting, especially yellow or green.
- Belly looks swollen.
- Any other questions or concerns.

You will receive specific instructions and a follow up plan with each visit.

Do not hesitate to ask us if you do not understand something- we are here to help you and your child be successful!

Please feel free to call our office if you have any problems or concerns.

Provider: _____

Office Number: _____

Other Care Team Members:

Name: _____

Office number or email: _____

After hours number, if applicable: _____

Thank you for allowing us to care for your child.