

MATTHEW S. COHEN, MD FAAP
PATIENT INSTRUCTION SHEET

CONSTIPATION

Your child has been diagnosed with constipation. Usually, the cause of constipation is dietary or behavioral. Some children will require medication(s) to relieve their constipation. It is important to remember that it is often necessary to relieve the distal obstruction of stool prior to effective dietary or medical intervention.

DIET:

- **FOR INFANTS:** Change rice cereal to oatmeal or barley cereal and add pear or prune juice to the cereal in the place of milk or formula. You may prefer to simply mix 2 oz of prune juice with 2 oz of water giving half in the morning and the other half at night. You may also mix 2 oz of apple juice with 2 oz of water in place of or in addition to the prune juice/water combination. If your infant eats baby food in jars, emphasize individual dark green vegetables, pears, apricots, and plums. Avoid feeding mixed dinners and potatoes until your child's pediatrician suggests that you reintroduce them.
- **FOR OLDER CHILDREN:** Try to increase the amount of fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grain cereals. Raisin Bran, Granola, and Frosted Mini Wheats are cereals that your child may like and have moderate amounts of fiber in them. Whole Wheat or Bran breaks are better choices than white breads. Beans, such as pinto, kidney, and black beans are high fiber. Avoid potatoes, rice, apple sauce and toast (BRAT diet) during the treatment phase of constipation.

Encourage your child to drink more fluids, especially water. A serving of pear juice or prune juice every day can help maintain normal stools.

If your child is over two years, you can limit milk to 16 ounces every day.

BEHAVIOR:

About 30 minutes after a meal (especially breakfast), your child may feel the urge to have a bowel movement. If they are in a rush or already off to school, they may miss the opportunity and will be unable to move their bowel later. Try to have a regular routine regarding meals and time to use the bathroom after meals. Increasing the amount of exercise your child gets can also help with constipation, however ensure that the child remains adequately hydrated.

MEDICATIONS:

The following medication(s) have been recommended for your child:

Name: _____ Dose: _____ every hours, for _____ days

Name: _____ Dose: _____ every hours, for _____ days

