

CONSTIPATION

Q. “Our 3.5 year old suffers chronic constipation like most of the other children with VCFS and lies of the floor in pain most days. He also suffers back pain which our pediatrician says is unusual but is not a concern. We are still worried as there is no explanation and have demanded another referral to the gastroenterologist even though the pediatrician was reluctant. He takes paraffin oil twice a day (18ml) and still stores up bowel movements for weeks at a time, when it does happen it is horrendous. Eating is also becoming more of an issue and if we can avoid eating we will. We also show symptoms of mood swings which I believe are related to bowel problems. Toilet training seems to be out of the question as he has no control over the bowel or any idea when he is urinating.

Also regarding mood swings (ADHD?) etc, what age should they start being assessed for psychiatric/psychological disorders??”

Caroline

A. I just wanted to say that my Matthew – now 16 – was born without an anus; he has been constipated all his life (from a baby). Our surgeon who opened his anus put him on Senokot chocolate granules (a teaspoon a day, available from chemist) when he was about 2-3 (too long ago – can’t remember!) and this kept his motions soft & regular. We used to give him a teaspoon in the morning after breakfast & he would have movement in the afternoon, which really suited when he started school, as he needed to be monitored on the toilet, and sometimes helped. Many a day I had my head in the toilet pushing around his bottom to help the poo form to come out, which had nothing to do with there being no anus when born, but everything to do with low tone in the bowel & hard poo! This would happen if I forgot to give him the Senokot or he forgot to take it till later in the day.

Now he’s a big boy he has Senokot tablets (one a day), which he is responsible for remembering as he knows if he forgets he will get pain in the tummy. We did try to reduce the amount of Senokot earlier this year (every 2nd day) but just ended up making him all blocked up had too many days off school & had to resort to a laxative.

There were concerns from some Dr’s who were worried that he was on Senokot long term, but most agree that he just needs it & will continue until he can really manage his bowels himself, if ever.

Bowel motions are very close to my heart, its something we have battled with most of Matthew’s life & I hope some of what I said can help. I would though just see your Dr when putting him on the Senokot, and there are many natural plant laxatives out there,

we just found that knowing he was getting the right dose every day, didn't have to pay attention to fibre in the diet (he too had eating problems) so it worked well for us.

I hope this helps – phone me if you would like clarification on anything or to talk it through.

Helen Paul

This story has been edited. Please email president@vcfsfa.org.au for full version and contact numbers of Helen

A. We find Carly also has terrible trouble with excruciating number 2's. We seem to have solved this by only giving her wholemeal pasta, wholemeal or seeded bread, she eats plenty of fruit but have found the soluble style of Metamucil fantastic. I put it in our cooking, in her milk or water and she won't even know it's there. It is working really well for her. It would be tough getting this little one to eat I'm sure, maybe try the metamucil in fun stuff like milkshakes or sprinkled into ice cream? Even just in the drinking water to start with! Good luck Caroline

Louise