

Assessment

- The nurse or doctor may examine your abdomen and listen to the bowel sounds
- When you discuss constipation, please make sure you show the doctor or nurse all the medicines that you are taking for your bowels, even ones you may have bought in the chemist

Important Points To Remember

Constipation is treatable. Do not ignore it

- Constipation is best prevented, but can be managed successfully in most cases
- To prevent constipation try to do a little exercise every day, eat well and give yourself time in the toilet
- Always consult your palliative care nurse or doctor for advice on how to manage your constipation

Overflow Diarrhoea

- When you are constipated the bowel can begin to leak out watery stools that can appear like diarrhoea
- If you are constipated and then develop diarrhoea, you should talk to your nurse or doctor before taking anti-diarrhoea medication
- If you have diarrhoea, you may still be constipated

N.B.

You should contact your doctor if you have constipation with severe abdominal cramping and vomiting. You may need to have an X-ray.

Assessment

- The nurse or doctor may examine your abdomen and listen to the bowel sounds
- When you discuss constipation, please make sure you show the doctor or nurse all the medicines that you are taking for your bowels, even ones you may have bought in the chemist



Treatment

- There are various medications called laxatives available to prevent and treat constipation
- If you are taking painkillers, particularly morphine or opioids, you will be taking laxatives and your nurse will advise you of any changes
- Having one bowel motion does not mean that a constipation problem is resolved, it is important to keep taking laxatives regularly

Patient Information Leaflet



Constipation

Produced by Geraldine Keane Campbell, Roscommon County Hospital (RCH); in association with Dr Dymphna Waldron, Consultant Palliative Medicine, Galway University Hospital (GUH), RCH and Roscommon Home Care Team; Dr Eileen Mannion, Clinical Lecturer Palliative Medicine, GUH; Professor Philip Larkin, Professor of Clinical Nursing, Palliative Care UCD; Helen Ely, RCH; Roscommon Home Care Team