

# Bowel emptying disorders

Intestinal emptying disorders include constipation, encopresis, fecal incontinence, and diarrhea. The physiological frequency of bowel movements varies with age.

## Constipation

**Constipation** is defined as the difficulty of emptying stiff stools and the inability to spontaneously defecate. This is partially subjective. It can be an isolated problem (dyschezia) or a symptom accompanying another disease (organic, secondary constipation). It is very important to distinguish organic constipation from functional constipation.<sup>[1]</sup>

 For more information see *Constipation*.

 For more information see *Constipation (pediatrics)*.

### Definition of constipation according to the Roman criteria II (1999)

Some of the following must apply:

- less than 3 stools per week;
- solid stool in more than 25% of defecations;
- feeling of incomplete emptying in more than 25% of defecations;
- the need for manual maneuvers to facilitate more than 25% of defecations (digital stool evacuation, pelvic floor support).<sup>[1]</sup>

## Pathogenesis

Decreased water content in the stool, prolonged passage time through the digestive tract, and/or the presence of a mechanical barrier in the terminal part of the digestive tract contribute to constipation.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Therapy

### Regimen and dietary measures

- Regular daily eating regime, sufficient fluid intake, and enough fiber in the diet (whole grains, fruits, vegetables).
- Plenty of exercise, belly massage, and no laxatives.
- Training of defecation reflex with the use of physiological gastrocolic reflex (after waking up a glass of water, usual morning tasks, breakfast, with an interval of 20–30 minutes attempted defecation).

### Pharmacological treatment

Lactulose, saline laxatives, laxative minerals, enemas, drugs stimulating colonic motility.<sup>[1]</sup>

## Supposed constipation

- Improper judgement or psychological disorder.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Pseudoobstruction

- It occurs with low food intake.<sup>[2]</sup>

## Encopresis

- Involuntary bowel emptying (into clothes, to the floor)<sup>[2]</sup>

## Soiling

- involuntary leakage of stool in chronic constipation
- stagnant stool in the rectum escapes
- may be mistaken for diarrhea<sup>[2]</sup>

## Stool incontinence

## Diarrhea

**Diarrhea** can be characterized as frequent bowel movements. This is a symptom with considerable subjective variation. Diarrhea is a common manifestation of various digestive disorders. Diarrheal diseases cause up to 20 million deaths a year worldwide, with young children most at risk.<sup>[3]</sup>

 For more information see *Diarrhea*.

 For more information see *Diarrhea (pediatrics)*.

 For more information see *Differential diagnosis of diarrheal diseases*.

 For more information see *Therapy of diarrheal diseases*.

## Links

## Reference

1. KLENER, Pavel, et al. *Vnitřní lékařství*. 3. edition. Praha : Galén, 2006. pp. 608-609. ISBN 80-7262-430-X.
2. BENEŠ, Jiří. *Studijní materiály* [online]. ©2007. [cit. 2009]. <<http://www.jirben.wz.cz/>>.
3. KLENER, Pavel, et al. *Vnitřní lékařství*. 3. edition. Praha : Galén, 2006. pp. 610-613. ISBN 80-7262-430-X.

## Literature

- HRODEK, Otto – VAVŘINEC, Jan, et al. *Pediatric*. 1. edition. Praha : Galén, 2002. ISBN 80-7262-178-5.
- ŠAŠINKA, Miroslav – ŠAGÁT, Tibor – KOVÁCS, László, et al. *Pediatric*. 2. edition. Bratislava : Herba, 2007. ISBN 978-80-89171-49-1.