

RED FLAGS

Potential Bowel Obstruction

- Billious / Faecal vomiting
- No flatus
- AXR dilated bowel loops

ABCDE ASSESSMENT

ANY RED FLAGS

INVESTIGATE / MONITOR

- Full set observations
- IV Access
- Bloods FBC / U&E / LFT / Bone
- AXR
- +/- Erect CXR

NO

YES

CALL SENIOR

STEP 1

-DETERMINE CAUSE OF CONSTIPATION-

MECHANICAL

- Obstruction
- Immobility

METABOLIC

- Deranged electrolytes
- Hypocalcaemia / Hypothyroidism
- Dehydrated

IATROGENIC

- Medications - Opioids
- Post-surgical Ileus

NEUROGENIC

- Spinal / Autonomic nerve injury

Discuss any potential Obstruction / Neurogenic cause with Senior first

STEP 2

-TREATMENT-

Treat any reversible causes

Laxatives

Impaction
PR Manual evacuation

Small or Hard Stool

Slow Colonic Transit

BULK FORMING LAXATIVES

OSMOTIC LAXATIVES

STIMULANT LAXATIVES

ISPAGHULA HUSK
1 Sachet PO BD

MOVICOL
1-2 Sachet PO
OM-TDS

SENNA
7.5-15mg PO ON

LACTULOSE
10-15ml PO BD

BISACODYL
5-10mg PO ON

MAGNESIUM HYDROCHLORIDE
30-45ml PO ON

GLYCEROL SUPPOSITORY
1 PR PRN

ENEMA
1 PR PRN

How much to give:

- There are several laxative regimes used by doctors
- No one regime is suitable for all patients

General advice:

- Start low dose and increase as needed to avoid excessive laxative treatment causing diarrhoea

Always consult BNF for dose / administration and contraindications for all above medications