

Name of Child: _____ Date: _____

Bowel Clean Out Instructions for Constipation

Age: 4 to 5 year old child

What is constipation?

Constipation is a common problem in children. Constipation is when stools (also called **bowel movements** or **poop**) are hard, dry, and difficult or painful to get out. Constipation can also include times when a child has fewer bowel movements than they normally do. The instructions in this handout offer a specific process to follow to help your child “clean out” stool from the lower part of the bowel (**the colon and the rectum**) using medicines and clear liquids. It is important for you to read all of the instructions before your child starts the bowel clean out process.

Items to buy before the bowel clean out:

The items you need for your child’s clean out are available over the counter at the store. This means you do not need a prescription to buy them. **Go to the store before your child’s clean out to buy these items:**

- **Polyethylene glycol** (also called **MiraLAX®**)
- **Stimulant laxative** (choose one)
 - One package of Ex-Lax® regular strength stimulant laxative chocolate (this option is typically the easiest to give to children)
 - Liquid senna (this option is gluten free)
 - Liquid bisacodyl (also called **Dulcolax®**)

Note: The Ex-Lax® regular strength laxative chocolate is a chewable option. Liquid bisacodyl (**Dulcolax®**) is available at some stores or your child’s doctor can write a prescription for liquid senna.

- **Liquid glycerin suppositories or enemas**

Buy the correct suppositories according to your child’s age listed on the product packaging.

Important: If your child is 4 years old, choose the suppository option. Enemas are not for use in children under 5 years old.

- **Clear liquids**

Do not give liquids with red, purple, or blue food coloring or dye in them. Buy a few different options from the items listed here:

- Fruit juices without pulp (apple, white grape, lemonade, white cranberry, limeade, peach)
- Water
- Clear chicken broth, bone broth, or vegetable broth (not beef broth)
- Gatorade®, Powerade®, Kool-aid®, Pedialyte®
- Plain Jell-O® without any added fruits or toppings
- Popsicles®, snow cones, slushes

Important information to know before your child starts the clean out:

- If your child feels like they are going to throw up (**nausea**) or starts throwing up (**vomiting**) during the clean out, stop giving the MiraLAX® mixture for 30 minutes. After waiting 30 minutes, have your child start drinking the MiraLAX® mixture again.
- Give only clear liquids on the day of the clean out. Your child should not eat any solid foods on the day of the clean out. If your child is extremely hungry, be sure to offer broth and Jell-O® first. If this does not help, you can give your child a few crackers to satisfy their hunger. Do not give your child a meal during the clean out process.
- If your child is having difficulty drinking the MiraLAX® mixture, call your child's doctor.
- Continue the clean out for one full day even if the clean out is successful before the end of the day.
- Use the Bristol Stool Chart below for reference. **The goal at the end of the clean out is for the stools to be clear, light or dark yellow in color, and watery without any solid pieces (see Type 7 in the chart below.)**

						
TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	TYPE 4	TYPE 5	TYPE 6	TYPE 7
Hard lumps. Difficult to pass.	Lumpy. Shaped like sausage.	Shaped like a sausage. Cracks on the surface.	Shaped like a sausage. Smooth surface.	Soft pieces with clear-cut edges.	Fluffy pieces with jagged edges. Mushy.	Watery. No solid pieces.

Bowel clean out instructions:

MiraLAX® can work within 30 minutes or it can take as long as 3 hours to start working. Each person's response to laxatives is a little different. **Make sure your child stays close to a bathroom after starting the MiraLAX®.** If possible, do the clean out on a day when your child will be at home. If your child takes maintenance medicines for constipation, stop giving them during the clean out.

Follow these instructions:

- 1) **Mix 2 capfuls of MiraLAX® with 16 ounces of a clear liquid** from the list on page 1. Use the cap from the MiraLAX® container to measure the correct amount. Mix well until the MiraLAX® dissolves.
- 2) **Give the MiraLAX® mixture 3 different times throughout the day:**
 - morning
 - afternoon
 - evening



- 3) **Give 30mg of a stimulant laxative** when you give the first MiraLAX® mixture in the morning.
Options include: 2 squares Ex-Lax® regular strength stimulant laxative chocolate, liquid senna, or liquid bisacodyl (**Dulcolax®**).
- 4) **Give your child extra clear liquids** in between drinking each 16 ounce mixture of the MiraLAX®.
It is important for your child to stay hydrated. Your child needs to try their best to **drink an extra 32 ounces** of clear liquids during the clean out for the MiraLAX® to work correctly.
- 5) If your child is struggling with stool output on day one or if they have nausea and vomiting that does not stop on day one, insert either one liquid glycerin suppository into your child's bottom (**rectum**) or give an enema by gently inserting the tip of the nozzle into your child's bottom. Read the package for instructions on correct dosing and how to give the suppository or enema correctly.
Important: If your child is 4 years old, choose the suppository option. Enemas are not for use in children under 5 years old.
- 6) If your child is not having watery stools at the end of day one, repeat the clean out instructions on day 2. If day 2 of the clean out is needed, insert either one liquid glycerin suppository into your child's bottom or give an enema by gently inserting the tip of the nozzle into your child's bottom on the morning of day 2. **Important: If your child is 4 years old, choose the suppository option. Enemas are not for use in children under 5 years old.**

After the bowel clean out:

- Your child can go back to their normal diet the day after they complete the clean out.
- On the day after the clean out, restart any maintenance medicines for constipation your child takes, unless your child's doctor gives you different instructions.
- If the clean out is still not successful after day 2, call your child's doctor for next steps.
- **Information if your child is on service with one of Phoenix Children's Gastroenterologists:**
 - If your child is not tolerating the MiraLAX® mixture, call the office at **602-933-0940**.
 - If you have urgent questions and you need to talk to your child's gastrointestinal (GI) doctor after regular business hours on weekdays, holidays, or on weekends, call the hospital operator at **602-933-1000** and ask for the GI doctor on-call.
 - Call the GI Clinic 4 - 6 weeks after your child's clean out with an update on your child's progress.
 - Call sooner if your child has signs of constipation including straining during bowel movements, skipping days between bowel movements, your child's belly is distended, or your child feels bloated.
- **Information if your child is not on service with one of Phoenix Children's Gastroenterologists:**
 - Call your child's doctor with any questions or concerns.
 - Keep your child's doctor informed about your child's progress.



Now that you have read this:

- ☐ Tell your nurse or doctor what a bowel clean out is for. (Check when done.)
- ☐ Tell your nurse or doctor how you will mix the MiraLAX® mixture for your child. (Check when done.)
- ☐ Tell your nurse or doctor how you will know if the clean out worked for your child.
(Check when done.)
- ☐ Tell your nurse or doctor how you will know if your child needs to repeat the clean out on day two.
(Check when done.)



If you have any questions or concerns,

☐ call your child's doctor or ☐ call _____

If you want to know more about child health and illness, visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Thomas Campus

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phoenixchildrens.org | theemilycenter.org

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Disclaimer

The information provided is intended to be general information for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of an examination, treatment, or consultation with a health care provider. If you have any questions about your child's care, contact your child's health care provider.