

# Chronic Constipation Treatment

## 3-Day Cleanout and Maintenance Dosing Tables

---

**Constipation treatment consists of a 3-day cleanout, repeated cleanouts if necessary, and maintenance treatment for up to a year or more.**

Your provider will select two medicines to help with your child's constipation: a stool softener and a stimulant laxative. Most stool medicines can be bought over the counter at your local pharmacy without a prescription. Higher-dosed stimulant laxatives are by prescription.

Both medicines are taken for an initial 3-day cleanout. This 3-day treatment can be repeated every 2 weeks as needed until you get the desired results.

In addition, as maintenance, your child will take a daily dose of stool softener for several months to a year.

If your child is in a lot of distress, and is old enough, an enema can be added to the cleanout.

These instructions are to be used with guidance from your child's primary healthcare provider or GI provider who prescribes these medicines. Check with your healthcare provider first before giving any type of medicine to your child.

---

### First part: 3-day cleanout phase

First, complete a 3-day bowel cleanout with 2 medicines. See the chart on the next page for your child's medicines and doses and give as directed:

- **Cleanout medicine 1: Stool softener – polyethylene glycol (Miralax, Glycolax or PEG)**

Polyethylene glycol brings water into the bowels. Mix the polyethylene glycol with the amount of liquid clear recommended. You may use clear liquid such as juice, water or tea. Have your child drink lots of liquids when they are on any of these medicines to prevent dehydration.

- **Cleanout medicine 2: Stimulant laxatives – Senna or bisacodyl**

This cleanout may be repeated in two weeks until your child has stools that are of mashed-potato-consistency every day, no stomach pain, and no soiling.

---

**If needed, repeat 3-day cleanout**

### Second part: maintenance phase to keep bowels regular

#### Long-term daily stool softener given for 6 to 12 months

As soon as your child completes the first 3-day cleanout, give polyethylene glycol once daily (not twice), in the same single dose you used for the cleanout. It needs to be taken daily for at least 6 to 12 months and often longer. Mix in clear liquid, such as juice, tea, or water, not milk. It's very important to mix the medicine with the full amount of liquid suggested. You can increase or decrease the dose as needed to achieve mashed-potato-consistency stools.

---

#### To Learn More

- Gastroenterology 206-987-2521
- Urology 206-987-2509
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org](http://seattlechildrens.org)

#### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



**Seattle Children's**<sup>®</sup>  
HOSPITAL • RESEARCH • FOUNDATION

Approved by Seattle Children's Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee 2/18/2020.

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201. This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

2/20  
PE1071

© 2020 Seattle Children's, Seattle, Washington. All rights reserved.

**First part: 3-day cleanout phase - Use stool softener and a stimulant laxative**

Use these medicines only as directed by your healthcare provider.

Repeat every 2 weeks if necessary or as directed by your provider

**Cleanout medicine 1: Stool softener – polyethylene glycol (Miralax, Glycolax or PEG)**

Medicine name	How often	Child’s weight (kg)	Child’s weight (lbs)	Miralax dose	Mix with clear liquid
<b>Polyethylene glycol</b> (Miralax, Glycolax or PEG)  1 capful = 17 grams. Use the cap that comes on the medicine bottle.	2 times a day	10 to 14.9 kg	22 to 32 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> ½ capful	4 to 6 ounces
		15 to 19.9 kg	33 to 43 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> ¾ capful	4 to 6 ounces
		20 to 24.9 kg	44 to 54 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 capful	6 to 8 ounces
		25 to 29.9 kg	55 to 65 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ¼ capfuls	8 ounces
		30 to 39.9 kg	66 to 87 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ½ capfuls	8 to 12 ounces
		40 to 49.9 kg	88 to 109 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ¾ capfuls	8 to 12 ounces
		50 to 69.9 kg	110 to 154 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 capfuls	8 to 12 ounces.
		70 kg and over	Over 154 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 ½ capfuls	12 to 16 ounces

**Cleanout medicine 2: Stimulant laxative – choose either Senna or bisacodyl**

Medicine name	How often	Child’s weight(kg) (and pounds)	Child’s age	Dose (OTC = over the counter)
<b>Senna</b> Available at these strengths: • 8.8-mg-per-5-ml liquid by prescription • 8.6 mg tablet by prescription or over the counter • 15 mg chocolate chew (ExLax) over the counter	1 time a day, at bedtime	10 to 25 kg (22 to 55 lbs)	2 to 6 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 2.5 ml liquid by prescription <b>or</b> <input type="checkbox"/> ½ tablet by prescription or OTC
		25-40 kg (55 to 88 lbs)	6 to 12 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 ml liquid by prescription <b>or</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 tablet by prescription or OTC <b>or</b> <input type="checkbox"/> ½ chocolate chew OTC
		40 kg + (88 lbs and over)	12 years +	<input type="checkbox"/> 10 ml liquid by prescription <b>or</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 2 tablets by prescription or OTC <b>or</b> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 chocolate chew OTC
<b>OR</b>				
<b>Bisacodyl</b> 5 mg tablet by prescription or over the counter	1 time a day, at bedtime	15-40 kg (23-88 lbs)	3 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 tablet by prescription or OTC
		40 kg + (88 lbs and over)	10 years +	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 2 tablets by prescription or OTC

Medicines you can buy at the drugstore come in many strengths. Be sure to check strength of the medicine on the bottle - usually written as milligrams (mg) per ml or (mg) alone.

Second part: maintenance phase - Use a stool softener

Stool softener

Medicine name	How often	Child's weight (kg)	Child's weight (lbs)	Miralax dose	Mix with clear liquid
<p><b>Polyethylene glycol</b> (Miralax, Glycolax or PEG)</p> <p>1 capful = 17 grams. Use the cap that comes on the medicine bottle.</p> <p>You can increase or decrease the dose as needed to achieve mashed-potato-consistency stools.</p>	1 time a day	10 to 14.9 kg	22 to 32 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> ½ capful	4 to 6 ounces
		15 to 19.9 kg	33 to 43 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> ¾ capful	4 to 6 ounces
		20 to 24.9 kg	44 to 54 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 capful	6 to 8 ounces
		25 to 29.9 kg	55 to 65 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ¼ capfuls	8 ounces
		30 to 39.9 kg	66 to 87 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ½ capfuls	8 to 12 ounces
		40 to 49.9 kg	88 to 109 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ¾ capfuls	8 to 12 ounces
		50 to 69.9 kg	110 to 154 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 capfuls	8 to 12 ounces
		70 kg and over	Over 154 lbs	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 ½ capfuls	12 to 16 ounces