

GENERAL BOWEL CARE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES FOR DIARRHEA

Assessment **Always keep in mind potential bowel obstructions ** (i.e. overflow diarrhea)

Please note: This guideline may not apply to all chemotherapy regimens. Refer to treatment protocols for specific chemotherapy induced side effects.

Patient History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient's usual bowel pattern • Patient's usual bowel regimen • Assess dietary intake of fiber, fruit and vegetables and fluid • Assess activity level • Assess if on medications, including antibiotics, known to cause constipation or diarrhea • Date and time of last BM, associated discomfort, stool characteristics
Physical Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe abdomen for distention • Listen for bowel sounds • Palpate abdomen for tenderness, stool in colon • Digital rectal examination (if appropriate) • Assess for presence of nausea, vomiting, pain, urinary incontinence or diarrhea
Functional Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privacy • Appropriate size and height of toilet, commode, bedpan

DIARRHEA MANAGEMENT

NON-DRUG THERAPY

- Avoid foods that aggravate the problem (e.g. milk and milk products)
- Restrict diet to low residue or bland foods.

DRUG THERAPY

Attapulgite (Kaopectate [®])	60 or 120 ml. po initially and after each loose bowel movement
Loperamide (Imodium [®])	4 mg po initially, then 2 mg po after each loose stool (maximum daily dose = 16 mg)
Diphenoxylate (Lomotil [®])	2.5 or 5 mg po TID or QID (maximum daily dose = 20 mg)
Alternate Imodium with Lomotil – either alternate doses or alternate daily	
Octreotide	100 mcg sc. Q8H – 500 mcg sc. Q8H
Cholestyramine	4-12 gm po TID (often used in biliary tract disease)
Codeine	10 – 60 mg po Q4H (unless on another opioid)

NOTE:

- Antidiarrheal agents are not recommended if bacterial etiology suspected.
- With certain treatment protocols (e.g. Irenotecan, 5-Fluorouracil, Xeloda and Leucovorin), the presence of diarrhea should initiate consideration of chemotherapy dose reduction / discontinuation.
- Ensure adequate hydration.