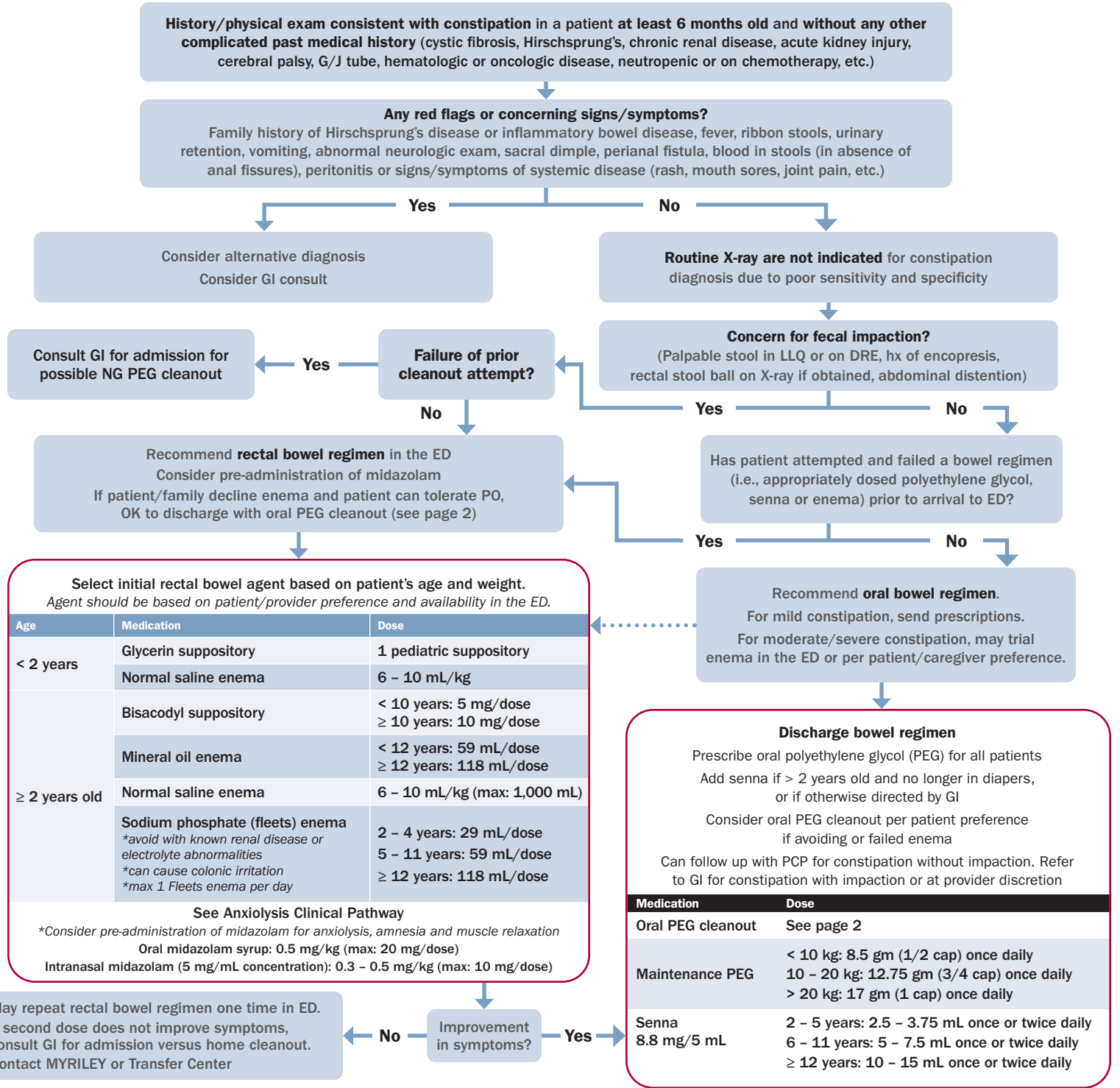


# Constipation – Emergency Department

This best practice algorithm provides guidance on diagnosis and medical management for pediatric patients with constipation.

Created: April 2026 | Next review: April 2029  
 Created by: S. Holmstrom, MD; A. Kenneally, PharmD;  
 K. Hawa, MD; E. Andrewski, MD; K. Zaydan, MD  
 Reviewed by: Pediatric Gastroenterology, PEMCET



References  
 Tabbers M, DiLorenzo C, Berger MY, et al. Evaluation and treatment of functional constipation in infants and children: evidence-based recommendations from ESPGHAN and NASPGHAN. *J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr.* 2014;58:258-74.  
 Kilgore AL, Rogers Boruta MK, Ambarshtumya L, et al. Evaluation and management of pediatric refractory constipation: Recommendations from the NASPGHAN neurogastroenterology and motility committee. *J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr.* 2025;80:353-73.  
 Bardisa-Ezurra, Ullman R, Gordon J, et al. Diagnosis and management of idiopathic childhood constipation: summary of NICE guidance. *BMJ.* 2010;340:c2585.



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Calling from an ED or inpatient setting? **Call the IU Health Transfer Center for transfer or consult at 877.247.1177.**

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Home bowel cleanout instructions													
Day of cleanout instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare cleanout medications (see below) based on patient's weight</li> </ul> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Select Dose</th> <th>Patient Weight</th> <th>Medication</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>12 – 25 kg (26 – 55 lb)</td> <td>Mix 119 grams (7 caps) of Miralax with 32 ounces of Gatorade. Drink over 3 – 4 hours.</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>26 – 49 kg (57 – 108 lb)</td> <td>Mix 238 grams (14 caps) of Miralax with 64 ounces of Gatorade. Drink over 3 – 4 hours.</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>≥ 50 kg (≥ 110 lb)</td> <td>Take 4 bisacodyl 5 mg tablets once (total dose 20 mg) by mouth with 32 oz of Gatorade. Do not crush tablets.  About 2 hours later, mix 238 grams (14 caps) of Miralax with 64 ounces of Gatorade. Drink over 3 – 4 hours.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the day of the cleanout, your child should have a clear liquid diet all day.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examples of clear liquids include: water, Gatorade, Kool-aid, apple juice, lemonade without pulp, Sprite, 7-UP, ginger ale, white grape juice, Italian ices, popsicles, Jell-O, beef or chicken broth</li> <li>NO milk or milk products or anything with pulp.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Ensure that your child is drinking extra fluids throughout the day to make sure that they are staying hydrated. The fluid intake will also assist with an adequate cleanout.</li> </ul>	Select Dose	Patient Weight	Medication		12 – 25 kg (26 – 55 lb)	Mix 119 grams (7 caps) of Miralax with 32 ounces of Gatorade. Drink over 3 – 4 hours.		26 – 49 kg (57 – 108 lb)	Mix 238 grams (14 caps) of Miralax with 64 ounces of Gatorade. Drink over 3 – 4 hours.		≥ 50 kg (≥ 110 lb)	Take 4 bisacodyl 5 mg tablets once (total dose 20 mg) by mouth with 32 oz of Gatorade. Do not crush tablets.  About 2 hours later, mix 238 grams (14 caps) of Miralax with 64 ounces of Gatorade. Drink over 3 – 4 hours.
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Tips for cleanout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drink approximately 8 oz of the Miralax prep every 30 – 40 minutes. This will allow them to finish the prep in ~3 – 4 hours.</li> <li>If nausea occurs, it may help to suck on a citrus flavored candy/lollipop in between the cups of prep.</li> <li>If vomiting occurs, give a break for 30 minutes and begin again.</li> <li>If there are major issues consuming the prep, it is recommended to contact your provider.</li> </ul>												
Optional	<p>A physician may instruct you to add one of these medications to your bowel cleanout. If so, see below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senna may be utilized instead of bisacodyl tablets if patient cannot swallow whole tablets or per provider preference                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>≥ 50 kg (≥ 110 lb): 15 – 20 mL of senna liquid (8.8 mg/5 mL) or 3 – 4 chewable senna tablets (8.6 mg per tablet) once</li> </ul> </li> <li>Bisacodyl suppository                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 – 9 years old: 5 mg (1/2 suppository) rectally once</li> <li>10 years old or greater: 10 mg (1 suppository) rectally once</li> </ul> </li> <li>Glycerin suppository                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One pediatric or adult suppository rectally once</li> </ul> </li> </ul>												



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