

CONSTIPATION

Decreased frequency and/or change to smaller/harder stools

Almost all people will have issues with constipation at some point, but patients in hospice are especially prone to developing severe constipation

Causes



Decreased activity



Changes in diet with less fiber, less fluid



Medications - Very common cause

Symptoms



Decreased frequency of stool, harder to pass



Abdominal discomfort/pain



Fullness sensation in rectum



In patients with Dementia, can present as increased agitation



Sometimes constipation can present as small liquid stools due to 'overflow' from a fecal impaction

What to Do

- > Increase fluids (if safe) and increase activity if able
- > Laxatives have been provided by Hospice
- > It is not necessary to have a bowel movement every day, but should not strain or be passing hard stools

When to Call the Hospice

- > No bowel movement for more than 2 days
- > Increasing pain or discomfort
- > Passage of blood in stool

➤ Increasing agitation

➤ **LAXATIVES SHOULD ALWAYS BE TAKEN IF USING OPIOID PAIN MEDICATIONS**
(unless told otherwise by the Hospice Team)