

DIARRHEA

There are both common 'non-medical' causes and medical causes of diarrhea

Common 'Non-Medical' Causes

Foods



- > Dairy (Lactose)
- > Sodas (Fructose)
- > Excess fruit

Medications



- > Some liquid medications
- > Antibiotics
- > Normal side effects of medications that are now too strong



Liquid food through a feeding tube



Overtreatment of constipation



Anxiety

Medical Causes



Infections especially post antibiotic use



Related to type of cancer



History of abdominal radiation treatments



Overflow incontinence from fecal impaction



Bleeding from the intestine



Aggravation of underlying irritable bowel

What to Do First

- Review all medications with the Hospice Team
- Review whether this is a new problem or aggravation of old problem prior to hospice

- Take a look at diet - eliminate dairy, sodas, and excess fruit
- Review whether the diarrhea started after prolonged bout of constipation - if yes, discuss with team

Medications/Strategies

Anti-diarrhea medications are very effective:

- Imodium A-D. This is readily available over the counter. Use as instructed

Make sure to stay hydrated with fluids that contain some salt

- If diet is not sugar restricted, Gatorade is very effective
- Can use Pedialyte, Broths
- If urinating normally, this is a good sign that staying hydrated

Have available Ointment/Salves for 'Sore Butt'

- Butt balm
- Baby wipes
- A&D Ointment

When to Call the Hospice

- Diarrhea persisting despite use of Imodium
- Feeling dehydrated despite fluid intake, or unable to take fluids because of nausea/vomiting
- Bloody bowel movements
- Increasing or new abdominal pain