



National Alliance on Mental Illness

nami | Ohio

Medical Protocol Project

Bowel Dysfunction

What My Client Needs To Know About Bowel Dysfunction

- The medications your client is taking can make it difficult for him/her to have a bowel movement. That can make them feel uncomfortable.
- It is important for your client to keep track of any issues he/she might be having.
- Things to keep track of:
 - Is your client having less than 3 bowel movements a week?
 - Does your client strain at least 25% of the time?
 - Does your client have lumpy, hard stools or a sensation of incomplete evacuation more than 25% of the time?

Tips for Preventing and Helping my client with Constipation

- Drink at least 6-8 cups of liquid each day. Prune juice, hot tea, coffee or lemon water in the morning can help.
- Eat foods that are high in fiber:
 - Vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, kale, mustard greens, and collard greens
 - Fruits such as apples, pears, grapes, and berries
 - Nuts and seeds
 - Peas, beans, and lentils
 - Popcorn
 - Whole grain breads, cereals, and pastas
 - Brown rice

The Medical Protocol Project is funded by the Ohio Department of Mental Health

Bowel Dysfunction

Tips for Preventing And Helping My Client With Constipation (Continued)

- Eat at least 3 servings of raw vegetables or fruits every day.
- Add high fiber foods gradually; one additional serving every 2-3 days.
- Limit cheese and processed meats.
- Take time to go when you feel the urge ... don't put it off.
- Have the privacy you need.
- Exercise.
- Eat meals at the same time.
- Chew your food well.

What do I do if my client's constipation persists for more than two weeks?

- Encourage your client to see a physician or nurse practitioner to determine the source and treat the problem.

What is Bowel Obstruction?

- Bowel Obstruction is a serious condition caused by a blockage in the intestines.
- If your client experiences any of the following problems, he/she may be experiencing Bowel Obstruction and immediate medical attention is needed:
 - Swollen abdomen
 - Abdominal pain
 - General pain
 - Vomiting
 - Cramping and belly pain that comes and goes
 - Bloating
 - Constipation & lack of gas
 - Diarrhea

747 East Broad St.
Columbus, Ohio 43205

Phone: 614-224-2700
or 1-800-686-2646

Email: amiohio@amiohio.org
Website: <http://www.namiohio.org>