

KEY TAKE-OUTS: MANAGEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL CONSTIPATION

Adapted from Salvatore S, et al. Acta Paediatr. 107: 1512-20, 2018

PARENTAL EDUCATION AND REASSURANCE AS THE FIRST LINE OF MANAGEMENT

PROVIDE PARENTS INFORMATION ON:

- Normal infant defecation patterns

NUTRITIONAL MANAGEMENT

- Continue breastfeeding
- Proper formula preparation (for formula-fed infants)
- Some formula-fed infants with hard and infrequent stools could benefit from a formula with a partial whey hydrolysate, a formula containing a mixture of prebiotics and a high level of beta-palmitate
- Provide a balanced diet and appropriate fluid intake (for infants older than 6 months)

PHARMACOLOGICAL THERAPY

- Lactulose and polyethylene glycol maybe considered for functional constipation for infants over six months of age
- Rectal treatment with glycerine suppository should be restricted to provide acute relief
- Consider specialist referral and investigations in case of inappropriate growth, other warning signs or non response to treatment

FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS ONLY.

Breastmilk is best for babies. Good maternal nutrition is important for breastfeeding. Partial bottle feeding could negatively affect breastfeeding. Reversing a decision not to breastfeed may be difficult. Improper use of infant formula may affect the health of the baby. Social and financial implications should be considered.

REFERENCES:

- Vandenplas Y, et al. Acta Paediatr, 105: 244-52, 2016 [Expert group review]
Tabbers MM, et al. J Pediatr Gastroenterol Nutr, 58: 258-74, 2014 [NASPGHAN/ESPGHAN]
National Institute for health and care excellence. London: NICE, 2010 [NICE]
Salvatore S, et al. Ital J Pediatr, 42: 68, 2016