

Let's talk about constipation

Knowing the signs and what to do could save lives

Constipation can kill if it's not treated.

For people with a learning disability, it commonly causes complications which can lead to death.

If you care for someone with a learning disability, your support is vital to help keep them healthy and avoid the serious consequences of constipation.

What you can do:

- H**elp those you care for to know the signs using our poster and leaflet.
- E**ncourage them to tell someone they trust if they spot a sign.
- L**et their GP surgery know – book an appointment as a priority.
- P**revent in future – get a healthy diet and regular activity plan in place.

People with a learning disability and constipation

People with a learning disability are much more likely to suffer from constipation.

It might be caused by a health condition, or medications they are taking. They might also not be eating a balanced diet or getting enough exercise.

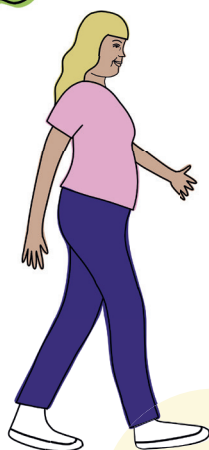
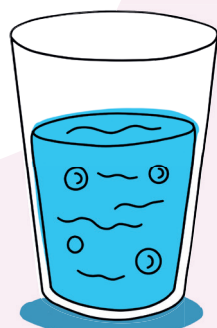
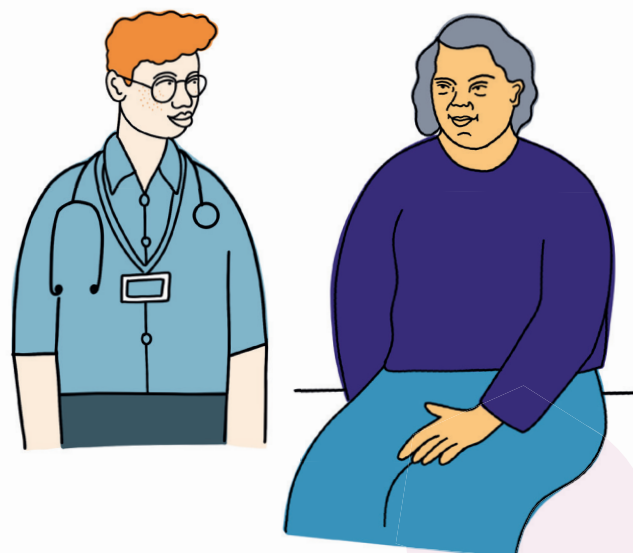
Most common signs of constipation:

- Pooing less than usual.
- A sore tummy.
- Pooing feels sore.
- Poos that are large, dry, hard or lumpy.
- Runny poos (or signs of streaking on underwear or pads).
- Changes in behaviour, such as agitation, showing discomfort or not eating
- Increase in temperature or smell of faeces on breath or around the body.
- Frequently touching anus or sitting on the toilet.



Time to contact their GP surgery?

If a person you care for tells you they've spotted one or more of the signs of constipation, you need to contact their GP surgery straight away to arrange an appointment. When you call the GP surgery, make sure the receptionist knows you're calling on behalf of a person with a learning disability.



Preventing constipation

Things that can help prevent constipation include:

- Eating a balanced diet, including fruit and vegetables.
- Drinking plenty of fluids.
- Getting regular exercise.

Find resources to help you discuss constipation with those that you care for at www.england.nhs.uk/publication/constipation-resources-for-carers/