

# Opioid-Induced Constipation

## Preventing Opioid-Induced Constipation

Constipation is a common diagnosis seen in hospitalized patients, especially the elderly and those taking opioid medications. Early identification and mitigation of risk factors can decrease the incidence of opioid-induced constipation in hospitalized patients.

### Risk Factors for Constipation



#### Medications

- Opioids
- Iron Supplements
- Calcium Channel Blockers
- Anticholinergics
- Antihistamines
- Diuretics
- Antidepressants (especially Tricyclics)



#### Dietary Habits

- High intake of meats and dairy
- Low intake of fruits, vegetables and fiber-containing foods



#### Lifestyle Habits

- Sedentary lifestyle/lack of physical activity

### Best Practices

- Obtain a good history, physical and medication list at admission to identify bowel habits and constipation risk factors
  - Use this to appropriately document/code type of constipation that may develop (opioid-induced, functional, IBS-related, etc.)
- Encourage adequate hydration
- Encourage ambulation/physical activity as tolerated and safe
- Start the patient on a stool softener and/or laxative as indicated at the time of starting opioid(s)

## References & Resources



[Management of Chronic Constipation in Adult Patients in Primary Care | NHS](#)



[Management of Constipation in Hospitalized Patients | MDPI](#)



[Constipation and Opioid \(Pain Medicine\) Use | OSU](#)



[Opioid-Induced Constipation | NIH](#)