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 fibercontaining foods



Lifestyle Habits

Sedentary lifestyle/lack of physical activity

References & Resources



Management of Chronic Constipation in Adult Patients in Primary Care | NHS



Constipation and Opioid (Pain Medicine) Use | OSU



Management of Constipation in Hospitalized Patients | MDPI



Opioid-Induced Constipation | NIH

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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)