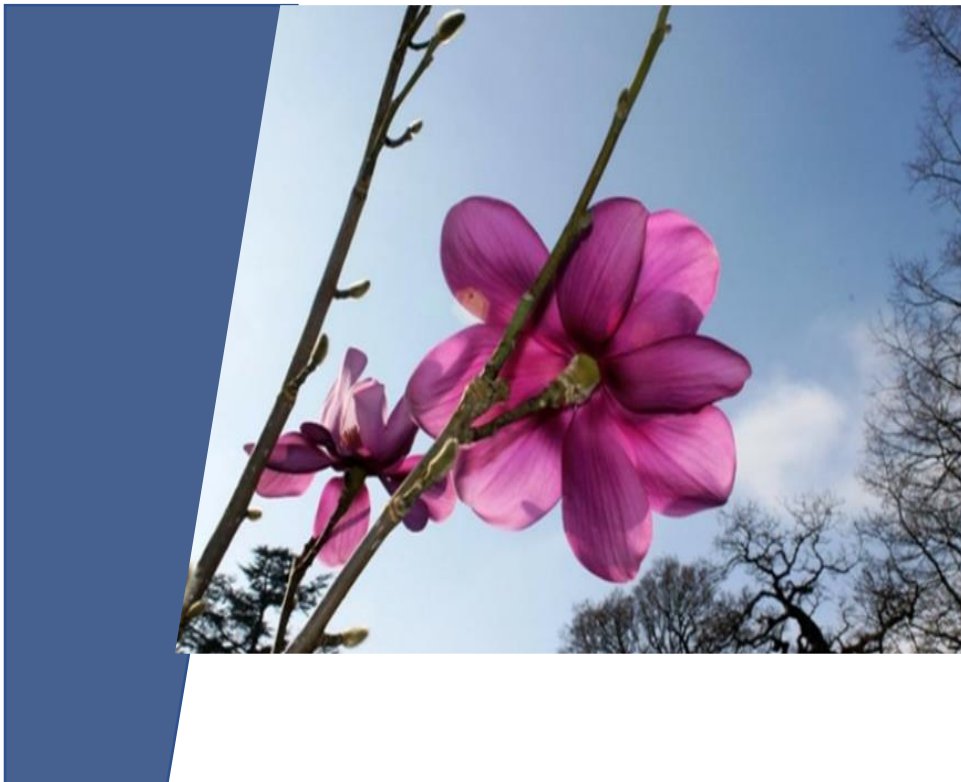




The Learning Disabilities Mortality Review  
(LeDeR) Programme



# Learning into Action - Constipation Easy- read version



University of  
**BRISTOL**



The Learning Disabilities Mortality Review (LeDeR) Programme is  
commissioned by the Healthcare Quality Improvement Partnership  
(HQIP), on behalf of NHS England.



## Dying for a poo

Constipation can kill, and it can affect up to half of all people with learning disabilities. That's why the Learning into Action working group on constipation wants to get more people talking about the problem.



Constipation in people with learning disabilities has been known to cause death. This is very rare, but is very easy to stop happening in the first place and so we should do all we can to prevent it.



Constipation can cause pain and distress, so it is important to know what the signs are and what to do about it.

## How to spot constipation

Not having a poo for 3 or more days

Not having a poo at least 3 times in a week

Having poo that is difficult to push out

Having poo that is large, dry, hard or like pellets, OR

After a long time since the last poo passing lots of soft smelly poo





## How to spot if someone else is constipated

Stomach ache, cramps and/or bloating

Not being hungry, feeling sick or being sick

Pain in or bleeding from the bottom

Poo stained underwear from watery poo leaking out

Some medicines like painkillers can make people constipated

A change in the way they behave

Talk to them about their poo, how often they go and what the poo is like

## How to manage constipation

Eat a healthy diet with lots of fibre and fruit and veg

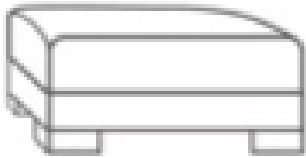
Drink plenty of fluids such as water, juice, squash etc

Get plenty of exercise



Try to go for a poo at the same time every day (but don't hold on to it if you need to go)

Give yourself plenty of time to poo



Try putting your feet on a low stool while you are sat on the toilet



Ask your doctor if you have any health issues or are taking any medicines that can cause constipation.

Ask your doctor or chemist if you need laxatives, which are medicines which make you poo.

Ask your doctor if having your stomach massaged will help

If you are constipated, make sure you see the doctor as soon as possible, and tell them if it doesn't get better

## People can die from constipation



Over a long time, the bowel can become very swollen and full of poo. When someone with constipation then has a poo it is very runny. This can happen again and again so someone has no poo for many days and then a very big one, which stretches the bowel even more.



This can lead to the bowel becoming so swollen and big that it can burst, which can kill someone.



Richard Handley was 33 and had a learning disability. He was living in respite care when he fell ill and went into hospital. Because of poor communication between the home and his doctors nobody knew that Richard had serious constipation. He died in hospital because he did not get the right treatment for it.



## Project Poo

Surrey NHS has been running a system called Project Poo to make people more aware about constipation and how to stop it from happening. It is run by nurses and they meet with GPs, care homes and other staff to make sure that they know the signs that they should be looking for.



# CONSTIPATION



*DID YOU KNOW MORE PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY SUFFER FROM CONSTIPATION THAN WITHOUT?*



*DID YOU KNOW THAT LOOSE STOOLS CAN BE A SIGN OF CONSTIPATION?*



*NOT TREATING CONSTIPATION OVER A LONG PERIOD CAN LEAD **TO DEATH!***

WHAT TO LOOK FOR?	WHAT CAN YOU DO?
<p>SYMPTOMS SIMILAR TO DIARRHOEA</p> <p>TUMMY ACHE.</p> <p>BLOATING.</p> <p>NOT WANTING TO EAT VERY MUCH.</p> <p>DIFFICULTIES ON THE TOILET.</p> <p>DRY, HARD AND LUMPY POO</p> <p>GOING TO THE TOILET LESS THAN 3 TIMES PER WEEK.</p>	<p>EXERCISE</p> <p>HAVE A POO DIARY</p> <p>A STAFF MEMBER WHO KNOWS YOU WELL CAN SUPPORT YOU TO YOUR GP APPOINTMENT. YOUR GP WILL WANT TO SEE YOU.</p> <p>EATING FOODS HIGH IN FIBRE SUCH AS FRUIT AND VEGETABLES. DRINK PLENTY OF FLUIDS!</p> <p>STAFF WHO SUPPORT YOU SHOULD HAVE A CARE PLAN IN PLACE FOR YOU.</p> 
<p>CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR.</p>  <p>FEELING SICK</p> 	

IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT ANY OF THIS PLEASE CONTACT YOUR GP – ASK YOUR CARER TO HELP YOU

IF YOU NEED ANY MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT YOUR PRIMARY CARE LIAISON NURSE – DETAILS ON THE BACK.