

About CHRONIC IDIOPATHIC CONSTIPATION



Information for Patients and Caregivers: Understanding the ACG-AGA Guideline on Pharmacologic Management of Chronic Constipation



What is Chronic Constipation?

Chronic constipation refers to problems with infrequent bowel movements, hard or lumpy stools, and/or difficult or incomplete bowel movements. Chronic constipation is a common problem affecting 1 in 10 people – that's over 30 million people in the U.S. Chronic constipation reduces quality of life, makes it difficult for affected persons to carry out their personal or professional activities, and accounts for billions of dollars in medical and work-related costs.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Patients should not be embarrassed to talk to their health care providers about constipation.
- While it may be embarrassing to you, it isn't embarrassing to your health care provider.
- There are diet, lifestyle changes, and over-the-counter and prescription medications that can significantly improve symptoms, quality of life, and daily functioning for patients with chronic constipation.
- The ACG-AGA guidelines provide scientific evidence of the efficacy and safety and implementation remarks to help guide the use of over-the-counter and prescription treatments for chronic constipation in clinical practice.



Questions You Should Ask Your Physician About Chronic Constipation

- What are the over-the-counter treatment options for chronic constipation?
- When should I consider a prescription option?
- What are the main side effects of the medications?
- What is the best option for me?
- If I don't get better with medications, what is the next step and what should I be concerned about?



Warning Signs or Alarming Symptoms

A careful work up should be considered in constipated patients who develop new symptoms after age 45 and have:

- unintended weight loss,
- evidence of GI bleeding (like red blood in the stool or black, tarry stools),
- unexplained iron deficiency, or
- a person has a family history of colon polyps or colon cancer.

LEARN MORE



ACG Patient Information:
Scan QR Code or visit

gi.org/topics/constipation-and-defecation-problems



Find a gastroenterologist
near you: gi.org/FindaGI



Read the Guideline
bit.ly/ACG-AGA-Chronic-Constipation-Guideline