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## POLICY STATEMENT

The Registered Nurse (RN) / Registered Midwife (RM) is authorised to instigate nurse/midwife-initiated medication without an authorised prescriber's order under the specific circumstances set out in the **INDICATIONS** section and provided there are no contraindications present.

It is important for nursing and midwifery staff to remain aware that:

- Minor ailments may be symptoms of other more serious diseases or may be adverse reactions to medication already prescribed
- Nurse-initiated medication may interact with the patient's prescribed medication
- The maximum daily recommended dose of the medication must not be exceeded<sup>1</sup>

The administering nurse/midwife must record the administration on an approved paper or electronic medication chart, clearly indicating that the medicine was nurse initiated.

If the patient continues to require the medication (i.e., more than two doses in 24 hours) then a medical officer (MO) must be consulted and a regular or PRN order obtained.

A change in the patient's condition such as newly occurring or increasing severity of symptoms must be reported to the MO and investigated.

## INDICATIONS

Management of treatable constipation (acute or chronic) in adults.

## CONTRAINDICATIONS

Hypersensitivity to the active substance or to any of the excipients.

Acute surgical abdomen

Intestinal obstruction

Ileus,

Patients with cramps, colic, nausea, vomiting

Appendicitis

Severe dehydration

Hypokalaemia

Undiagnosed abdominal symptoms.

Inflammatory bowel conditions

## PRECAUTIONS

Patients with rectal fissures or ulcerated haemorrhoids.

Elderly

Avoid in pregnancy

Safe in breastfeeding

Very hard stools (initial treatment with a softening suppository may be required)

**Bisacodyl suppository for constipation in adults****SESLHDPR/449****HISTORY/ASSESSMENT**

- Assess patient's usual bowel habits (frequency of stools, volume, colour, consistency)
- Patient's current bowel status (last time bowel opened)
- Assess for alterations in bowel patterns
- Refer to medical officer if patient has the following symptoms: blood in stools, weight loss, abdominal pain
- Assess patient for faecal impaction.
- Review patient's current medication for medicines which may cause constipation

**PROTOCOL/ADMINISTRATION GUIDELINES**

Caution: CHECK for allergies and/or contraindications			
Drug	Dose	Route	Frequency
Bisacodyl 10mg	ONE suppository	Rectal	Once

**MONITORING - POTENTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS/INTERACTIONS**

**Monitor:** bowel function and complete stool chart

**Adverse effects:** Rectal irritation, diarrhoea, nausea, abdominal cramping, pain, vomiting, proctitis, epigastralgia, tenesmus

**Drug Interactions:** Bisacodyl can alter the bioavailability of some drugs absorbed mainly from the small intestine such as digoxin and controlled release formulations.

**DOCUMENTATION**

A record of the administration must be made on the approved paper or electronic medication chart noting that the medication was nurse initiated.

A further record of the medication administered including indication, dose and effect must be included in the patient's health care record.

**PRACTICE POINTS**

- Onset of action is 15 to 60 minutes
- Ensure adequate fluid intake
- Ensure adequate dietary fibre intake.
- Encourage mobility, where possible.
- Consider review by dietician, if appropriate.

**REFERENCES/FURTHER READING**

1. [NSW Health Policy Directive Medication Handling PD2022\\_032](#)
2. [eTG complete](#). Management of functional constipation in adults. Melbourne: Therapeutic Guidelines Ltd. August 2022.
3. [Australian Medicines Handbook](#). Bisacodyl. South Australia: Australian Medicines Handbook Pty Ltd, January 2023.

**REVISION and APPROVAL HISTORY**

Date	Version Number	Author and Approval
July 2015	DRAFT	Pharmacy Department, Prince of Wales Hospital
September 2015	1	Approved by SESLHD Drug & QUM Committee
May 2018	DRAFT 2	Reviewed by nursing and pharmacy staff. Minor updates made
July 2018	2	Approved by SESLHD Quality Use of Medicines Committee
September 2021	DRAFT 3	Reviewed by nursing and pharmacy staff.
October 2021	3	Approved by SESLHD Quality Use of Medicines Committee
June 2023	DRAFT 4	NSW Medicines Formulary reviewed. Reviewed by nursing and pharmacy staff.
September 2023	4	Approved by SESLHD Drug and Therapeutics Committee