

# **CONSTIPATION**

## **Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled Fatal Four**

Definition — Constipation occurs when an individual has difficult or infrequent bowel movements. Constipation can lead to a blockage in the small or large intestine which prevents stool and gas from moving through in the usual way.

## Why are individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at a high risk?

- Lack of mobility
- Diet (e.g. lack of fiber or liquid)
- Certain medications (e.g. antidepressants, antihistamines, calcium and iron supplements, narcotic pain medicine)



### **Signs & Symptoms**

- Vomiting
- Bloated or hard stomach
- Decreased bowel sounds
- Behavioral outbursts
- Refusing meals
- Hard or small stools

#### **Preventative Action Steps**

- Increase the amount of fiber intake
- Increase liquid intake
- Increase activity
- Limit caffeine consumption
- Track and document bowel movements for individuals at risk

This information is for general guidance of best practices and is not intended to replace professional advice of a healthcare professional; dictate the care of a particular individual; or set a standard of care. Nor is this a complete list of measures a provider should take when delivering services.

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