

Example of GPs script:

Patient contribution

Nice to see you again, come and take yourselves a seat. Hello Lily, nice to see you, they are lovely wellies you've got there, aren't they? Great, how can I help today? Sorry, I didn't catch your first name?

Right, so this is all about her constipation - was there anything else that you were hoping that we would address today?

Any other health issues that you wanted to talk about today?

Just so that we can have a bit of background behind all of this, she's been having trouble with constipation for how long?

ICE

Okay, so she's been diagnosed with having constipation?

And you've now found a medicine that you're quite happy to be using for her?

There's no problem with me sorting out medication for her today, that will be absolutely fine. Was there anything else that you were particularly hoping that we would talk about today?

Was there anything that you were - apart from me giving you medicine today, was there anything else that you were particularly hoping that I could do for her today?

Just give me some feel for what you understand about where her constipation's come from and what it's linked with.

PSO

So, how's all this been affecting her?

Can I just double check, because I've not seen you for a wee while, who's at home these days?

Any issues at all?

Okay, you're not—neither of you are smokers?

And you're both in employment, finance is okay and everything?

Good. You've got plenty of support from your parents?

Red flags

You're quite happy about her developing and doing everything at the right stage and age and everything like that?

Focussed history

Okay, and she's now two, isn't she?

So, up until one year of age, not a problem at all; when she was first born, no problems at all, no delay in opening her bowels.

So, her poo's not now painful to pass, but she's holding on to it all the same.

Okay. So, her poo's not now painful to pass, but she's holding on to it all the same.

So, we're just having to give her a little bit extra to make sure that things keep on going.

Dietary-wise, what's she like?

Okay, so we've addressed all of those concerns...

Okay, because we talked about making sure that she had plenty of fluid and making sure that she's not lacking in that, and later on that she had plenty of fruit and veg – and those are not issues at all. She looks active.

She's managing to get around? She looks like she's grown really well, as well.

And we've kept an eye on her growth, haven't we? So, height and weight, and she's doing really well on her growth lines for height and weight, she's not overweight or anything like that.

Focussed examination

What I'd like to do, if it's okay with you, today is have a wee feel of her tummy and check her weight and make sure that that's all okay, and I'll sort her out with the medicine.

If you can stand yourself on the scale here first, if that's okay.

Tell you what, what we could do is we could get mum to hold you and then we'll do some maths to get it, all right? There we go.

Brilliant, so, including mum, we've got 97. And then, without Lily, it's 85. So, we've got 12 kilos of weight. That's brilliant, okay, great. Let's pop you up on the couch and I'll have a feel of your tummy. No soreness around her backside at the moment?

Okay, has anyone looked at her backside recently?

Yeah, if you undo the poppers, just lie her down. Shall we tickle your tummy a second?

That's great, that's great. Okay, no great big lumps of poo there, which is great. While you've got her there, before you put her back together, just two seconds... I'll just double check that everything's looks okay at the moment, okay. It looks as if it's healing really well, doesn't it, fabulous.

That's fine, great, great. Shall we see how tall you are as well? That's great, thank you, lovely. Great. Thank you.

Identify problem and explain diagnosis

Okay, no great big lumps of poo there, which is great.

Because she's been constipated for a year, we would expect that probably, that process is going to take a few months.

Check understanding

Does that all make sense?

Have you got any questions?

Develops management plan / shares management plan

It sounds like what we need to do is keep her on plenty of the medicine over a long period of time, and I'll make sure that you've got decent instructions on that.

Can I check, have you been given much written information about this sort of problem before?

I've got something else that may be of interest to both of you as well.

It can be really traumatic can't it? The idea that it's going to be sore when you poo?

And it's important for her to understand that in the long term, that she shouldn't be holding onto her poo for long, because it can cause problems. It's difficult for kids to understand that, but what I do have it a very lovely toy that may help you to share this with her when she's at an age that you can sit down and go through a picture book with her.

And this picture book would just show her pictures of what's going on there.

Now, she may not be at an age yet where she can fully understand that, but as she goes on to the age of three or four, then this may be something that she can connect with a bit better. So, I'm going to print off today before you go, is a copy of this little booklet. Alternatively, I can send it to you by email, and it might be a bit better by email.

So, this publication is called 'Talking about Constipation' and I'll send all of these to you; but it's got some nice pictures.

You've got it already?

Fabulous, so it's really useful to sit down with her, when she's of an age where she's going to take it in, and just go through it page-by-page and just for her to understand a little bit more about what triggers this constipation. And, it's important for adults, also, to understand this, and it's pitched somewhere between you as a grown-up and her as a child to try and understand what's important about the elements of keeping your bowels regular, and not holding onto it. Obviously, you've got a good grasp of what's going to protect her against this.

So, I think that probably what she needs is medicine to keep her going for at least two or three months, okay, and then after that, we'll probably find that the bowel itself will have re-trained itself so that it doesn't hang on for too long.

So, let me give you plenty of what she needs at the moment. So, this is the solution that she's taking, which is the 5mg per 5ml oral solution - that's the right strength isn't it?

And she's currently taking what dose of that at the moment?

5ml, so I've put it on as a repeat prescription.

Safety net and follow up

And then, after that we could try reducing the amount of medicine that she's taking and seeing what happens, and if, when we reduce the medicine that she's taking, things get better and she's still going, then you don't need the medicine any more.

But if there's any suggestion that it's painful when he poos, then we just need her back on the medicine, because otherwise, she'll hold onto it. Sometimes that process can be weeks, sometimes that process can be months, and sometimes it can be years. Because she's been constipated for a year, we would expect that probably, that process is going to take a few months.

Now, you've got a follow up with the paediatric department, haven't you?

No you haven't, so you don't necessarily only need to be seen by them anymore, but what I recommend is that you maybe touch base with me again in maybe a month's time, on the phone, so that we know where things are at and, so we can adjust the dose. So, if you find that in two weeks' time, she's a bit too loose, drop the dose - half it.

Great, okay, if she's going off her food, or if she's got tummy pain or got blood when she's pooing, or if it's difficult for her to go and you're worried about it - either bring her in to see us or we can speak it through on the phone in the first instance.