

Constipation in Patients With Serious Illness

Commonly Prescribed Laxatives

Consult product labels for onset of action. Side effects in general include nausea, abdominal bloating, flatulence, and cramping.

<i>Stimulant Laxatives</i>	
Medication	Usual adult dose
Bisacodyl	Enteric coated tabs 10 to 30 mg 1-2 times per day Rectal suppository 10 mg suppository 1-2 daily after breakfast
Senna	Senoside tablets 8.6 mg –15 mg, 2 to 4 tabs as a single daily dose or divided twice daily
<i>Osmotic Laxatives</i>	
Medication	Usual adult dose
Polyethylene glycol (PEG)	PEG powder 1-2 scoops (17 to 34 grams) in 240 mL (8 ounces) liquid 1 to 2 times daily
Lactulose	Liquid, 10 to 20 grams (15 to 30 mL) every other day to daily
Sorbitol	Liquid, 30 grams (120 mL of 25 percent solution) 1 -2 times daily
Glycerin (glycerol)	Rectal suppository (2 or 3 grams) 1-2 daily
Magnesium sulfate	Powder 5-10 grams or 1-2 tsp in 240 mL (8 ounces) water 1 time daily
Magnesium citrate	Liquid, 11.6 grams or 200 mL 1 time per day

Updated March 2023