

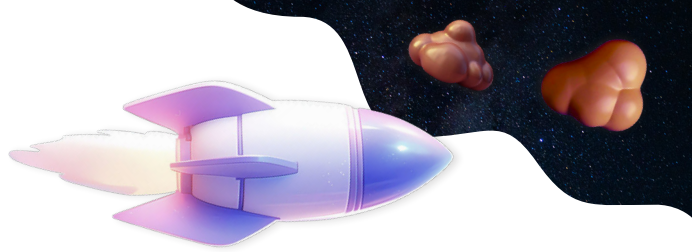
## Why has my child been prescribed CosmoCol®?

CosmoCol® is a type of laxative known as a macrogol and it is prescribed for children who have been diagnosed with constipation.

The aim of treatment is for your child to be passing soft poos once to three times most days. This is usually type 4 poo on the Bristol stool form chart.

However, for some children, particularly those who have developed a fear of pooing and therefore tend to 'hold on' when they get the urge to open their bowels, aiming for a softer less formed poo (type 5) may be initially suggested.

Once the fear of opening their bowels has been overcome then the dose of CosmoCol® can then be adjusted to produce a type 4 poo.



### Further information

For further information on CosmoCol® please speak to your GP, nurse or pharmacist.

You can also get useful information from:

#### England NHS 111

111 / [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

#### Scotland NHS 24

111 / [www.nhs24.scot](http://www.nhs24.scot)

#### Wales/Galw Lechyd Cymru NHS Direct

0845 4647 / [www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk)

#### Northern Ireland NI Direct

[www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

#### Bladder & Bowel UK

0161 214 4591 / [bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk](mailto:bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk)

#### Down Syndrome UK

[www.downsyndromeuk.co.uk](http://www.downsyndromeuk.co.uk)

[www.positiveaboutdownsyndrome.co.uk](http://www.positiveaboutdownsyndrome.co.uk)

Alternatively, you can contact Stirling Anglian Pharmaceuticals at:

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☎ 0345 527 0680

✉ [info@stirlinganglianpharmaceuticals.com](mailto:info@stirlinganglianpharmaceuticals.com)

🌐 [www.stirlinganglianpharmaceuticals.com](http://www.stirlinganglianpharmaceuticals.com)

**Always read the Patient Information Leaflet that comes with the pack of medicine.**

This Patient Guide has been produced as a service to medicine by Stirling Anglian Pharmaceuticals Limited.

 **STIRLING ANGLIAN**  
PHARMACEUTICALS

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## BRISTOL STOOL SCALE



**TYPE 1**

Separate hard lumps, like nuts (difficult to pass)



**TYPE 2**

Sausage-shaped but lumpy



**TYPE 3**

Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface



**TYPE 4**

Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft



**TYPE 5**

Soft blobs with clear cut edges



**TYPE 6**

Fluffy pieces with ragged edges - a mushy stool



**TYPE 7**

Watery, no solid pieces, entirely liquid (diarrhoea)

The Bristol Stool Form Scale was developed by researchers at the University of Bristol. It is a way of looking at stools. It helps to see if there is a relationship between what stools are like and how the bowel is working.

### References

1. Lewis SJ, Heaton KW. Stool form scale as a useful guide to intestinal transit time. *Scand J Gastroenterol* 1997;**32**:920-924

**CosmoCol Paediatric**®

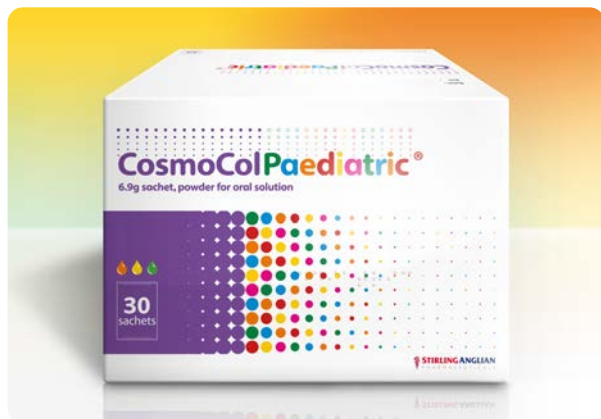
Macrogol 3350, sodium chloride, potassium chloride and sodium hydrogen carbonate

# Treating childhood constipation with CosmoCol®



## What can I do if my child will not drink the made up CosmoCol® solution?

The made-up solution does not have to be taken all at once and can be given in divided doses. So, for example you could give 20 - 30ml at a time keeping the rest in the fridge in-between doses.



Orange, Lemon and Lime

## How do I know how much CosmoCol® to give my child?

How much CosmoCol your child will need depends on different things, including how long they have been constipated and how they respond to the treatment.

However, most children will start on 1 - 2 sachets a day and the dose adjusted if necessary. CosmoCol® does not need to be given at a specific time and can be given with food. However, do try and get into a routine of giving it at the same time each day.



## How will I know if I need to adjust the dose?

Children should be passing a soft poo between three times a week and three times a day. Both the consistency and frequency of the poos is important. If it changes and is outside the range you have been told to aim for, then you may need to change the dose of CosmoCol.

The frequency and consistency of your child's poo are equally important. For example: if your child is doing at least three poos a week and the consistency is fine (the poos are soft), you should continue with the same dose. If your child is pooing at least three times a week, but the poo is hard or too watery, you may need to change the dose.

Likewise, if the frequency of your child's poo changes to less than 3 times a week or increases to more than 3 times a day then again that tells you that the dose of CosmoCol® may need to be adjusted.

## How much should I adjust the dose by?

If your child's poo becomes harder, more difficult to pass or less frequent you will usually be advised to increase by ½ to 1 sachet of CosmoCol® up to a maximum of 4 sachets per day.

If your child's poo becomes too soft or too frequent then you may be advised to reduce by 1 sachet if you child is taking more than 1 sachet per day. If your child is taking just 1 sachet, then you could reduce to half a sachet.

As CosmoCol® works on the poo as it is being formed it can take a day or two for the change in the dose to have an effect on the consistency or frequency of the poo. Therefore, do not alter the dose of CosmoCol® more frequently than every other day so that the effect of changes to the dose can be seen.

## How long should I continue to give the CosmoCol®?

The length of time children need to continue taking CosmoCol® will depend very much on how long the constipation has been present and the child's overall response to treatment.

If your child is passing soft stools with no problems, they should remain on the dose of CosmoCol that they have been taking. As the bowel recovers from the constipation you may well find that you will naturally start to reduce the dose as your child's poo becomes more softer or frequent until eventually it can be discontinued altogether.

There is never a rush to stop CosmoCol® and it is usually suggested to continue treatment for at least 3 - 6 months once the constipation has appeared to have resolved. Stopping laxatives too soon makes it more likely that the constipation will come back.

The NICE Childhood Constipation Guidelines recommends that children who are toilet training should remain on laxatives until the toilet training is well established. They also advised that children should be gradually weaned off laxatives and that some children may need to stay on laxatives for many years with a small number requiring ongoing laxative treatment.<sup>1</sup>

## Will it do any harm if my child stays on CosmoCol® long term?

It is important to continue laxatives for as long as they are needed. There is no evidence that using CosmoCol for as long as children need it causes any problems for children's bowels. Not treating constipation can lead to faecal impaction (when the bowel becomes overloaded with poo). This causes problems for children's health and wellbeing.<sup>3</sup>

## Side effects

CosmoCol® Paediatric, can cause some side effects, although most children will not experience them. Common ones include bloating, flatulence (wind) and nausea. For more information about side effects please read the leaflet included with this medication. If your child experiences these or any other side effects, or you have any concerns regarding continuing or adjusting the dose of CosmoCol® Paediatric then do contact your healthcare professional for further advice.

Further information about constipation can be found on the NICE Childhood constipation website [www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG99](http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG99)

## References

1. NICE Constipation in Childhood <https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG99>
2. Rajindrajith S et al (2003). Myths and misconceptions about childhood constipation. *European Journal of Pediatrics* 182:1447-1458
3. Vriesman MH, et al (2019) Quality of life in children with functional constipation: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Pediatr* 214:141-150