



# Assessment of Effectiveness and Usability of a Toileting Handout for Constipated Children



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## Setting and Coaches

Site: Vanderbilt Pediatric Gastroenterology Clinic  
Patient Population: Ages 0-18; Constipation, Failure to Thrive, IBD, IBS  
Preceptor: Stacy Hawkins, APRN  
Capstone Coach: Melissa Hilmes, MD

## Background

Approximately half of the patients seen on Wednesday afternoons at the clinic were being seen for constipation related issues. Patients with constipation were not receiving take home education on toileting habits. There was also a lack of resources that were kid friendly at the clinic.

## Aim Statement

We aimed to create a patient handout that supported constipation patients with toileting habits. We aimed to go from nonexistent patient feedback to 100% of patients rating the handout at least a 3 out of 5 in terms of helpfulness, and reporting that it was kid friendly and that they would use it.

## Measures

- We surveyed patients on effectiveness, utility, and how kid friendly it was. Survey questions included:
- How helpful do you think this handout will be on a scale from 1-5? (1 = not helpful at all; 5 = extremely helpful)
  - Do you think this handout is kid/family friendly?
  - Do you think you will use this handout?
  - Do you have any suggestions on how we can make this handout more helpful?

## Flowchart



## Results

67% of patients rated helpfulness of the handout as 5 out of 5  
33% of patients rated helpfulness of the handout as 4 out of 5  
100% of patients reported that they thought the handout was kid/family friendly  
100% of patients reported that they think they will use the handout

How Helpful Do You Think This Handout Will Be?

(1 = Not Helpful At All; 5 = Extremely Helpful)



## Conclusions

Overall, patients responded to the handout favorably. This handout was a valuable addition to the clinic's patient education resources.

Comments from parents of the patients included:

- "I'm going to tape this above the toilet"
- "He gave lots of smiles reading it"

## Lessons Learned

- The importance of providing patients take home education and that parents were enthusiastic about receiving this information.
- The ways to make a handout interactive and fun for children.
- The value of getting feedback on content from multiple professionals.
- Most handouts were targeted towards adults and contained few interactive features.
- Handouts do not take extensive time but do take consistent initiative.

## Future Work

- Adding patient handout to Vanderbilt's patient education database
- Creating a system to track feedback on patient education

# Toilet Time

## Timing

- Sit on the toilet every day at the same time. A great way to start your new toileting routine is to sit on the toilet after meals. **When do you plan on sitting on the toilet?**
- Sit on the toilet for about 5-10 minutes.
- It's okay if you don't actually poop during this time, but make sure you stick to your daily toileting routine!

## Position

- Keep your back straight and lean slightly forward.
- Keep your knees higher than your hips.
- Don't let your feet dangle! Use a foot stool if you need to.
- **Can you show someone how you are going to sit on the toilet?**

## Relax

- Don't strain.
- Don't hold your breath! Breathe using big breaths. Fill up your stomach, you should feel and see it move. Mouth open.
- **Can you show someone what a big breath looks like?**

## Focus

- Avoid being on your phone or tablet. No distractions!
- **How are you going to avoid distractions?**

## Pay Attention to Your Body

- If you feel the urge to go, go!
- **How do you know when you have to go?**



If you have any questions, please give us a call at 615-322-7449 or leave us a message on My Health at Vanderbilt.