

Diarrhoea, Change in Bowel Habit or Constipation

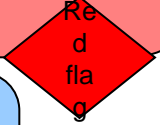
GSE-3 Protocol and Pathway – Gastroenterology Specialty (14/03/2011)

Patient Presenting Symptoms:

- Abdominal pain
- History of alternate diarrhoea & constipation
- History of bleeding
- History of loss of weight
- History of diarrhoea following holidays (traveller's diarrhoea)
- Food poisoning – diarrhoea & vomiting
- History of change in bowel habit
- History of antibiotics
- History of STD

Alarm features:

- <40 years with rectal bleeding & changes in bowel habit for 6 weeks or more
- >60 years with rectal bleeding for 6 weeks or more
- >60 years with change in bowel habit for 6 weeks or more
- Right lower abdominal mass consistent with involvement of large bowel
- Palpable rectal mass on PR examination
- Male with unexplained iron deficiency anaemia
- Non menstruating female with unexplained iron deficiency anaemia
- Unexplained weight loss



GP Assessment / Examination

- Abdominal examination for any palpable mass
- Palpable rectal mass on PR examination
- Past history of colitis, irritable bowel syndrome
- History of alcoholism (mal absorption syndrome)

Investigation

- Hb & FBC for iron deficiency anaemia
- ESR, CRP, LFT
- Stool examination for occult blood
- Stool test for C diff toxin
- Stool samples for culture, parasites & ova

Acute Diarrhoea

<72 hour duration

>72 hour duration

Oral rehydration

- Oral rehydration
- (OTC) Anti diarrhoea medication
- Stool culture for enteric pathogens
- Treat appropriately depending on pathology result

Chronic Diarrhoea Diarrhoea lasting more than 4 weeks

- Associated STD history positive
- Positive rectal examination

Referral to secondary care

Enteric pathogen positive

Treat appropriately depending on pathology result

Antibiotic Diarrhoea

- Stop antibiotic development if possible
- Symptomatic treatment

Change in bowel habit

- Consider:
- Irritable bowel syndrome
 - Consider colitis

Irritable bowel syndrome

- Treatment:
- Dietary advice
 - Antispasmodics
 - Antimotility agents

Failure of Treatment:
Refer to the secondary care

Colitis

Refer to secondary care

Key

