



# Bladder & Bowel UK

Supporting people with bladder and bowel problems

part of Disabled Living

## Macrogols

(eg Movicol Paediatric Plain, CosmoCol, Laxido)

This leaflet aims to provide further information about the Macrogols that have been prescribed for your child. **You should always read the leaflet that comes with the Macrogol and follow your doctor or nurse's advice about the correct dose for your child.**

### What are Macrogols?

Macrogols are a type of medicine known as osmotic laxatives. They are used to treat constipation.

#### How do they work?

Macrogols are not absorbed into the body. They work by keeping water in the stool (poo) to make sure the poo stays soft as it moves through the bowel. This makes it easy to pass. It also means that the poo is bulked up with water, which encourages the natural movement of the bowel muscles that push the poo along.

#### How is it taken?

Each sachet of Macrogol should be mixed with water as directed (usually 62.5mls per sachet for the children's strength and 125mls per sachet for adult strengths, but check the instructions). It should be stirred until it has gone completely clear and may then be diluted further or added to any other drink e.g. squash, milk etc. This is really important as the water is the active ingredient and is needed for the Macrogol to work properly. Therefore, the powder should never be sprinkled straight onto food. It is also not advised to mix it straight into milk, juice or anything else, as it is recommended that it is mixed with the right amount of water first

### Treating constipation

The aim, when treating constipation, is to give the child enough laxative for them to pass type 4 poos (see the poo chart on the next page). In some cases, where children have experienced a lot of discomfort or pain when passing large hard, constipated poos, it may be suggested to aim for a poo which is more like type 5.

## What is the correct dose of Macrologol?

Your healthcare professional will advise you about how much Macrologol to give to your child. However the dose may need to be adjusted until your child is pooing the right number of times (usually once or twice most days) and the consistency of the poos is right (the poo is not too soft and not too hard).

The usual dose is between 1- 4 sachets per day (although some children may need half a sachet and other children may need to take more than four sachets). The right dose for your child is the amount it takes to produce a poo that is soft and easy to pass (such as type 4 or 5) using the poo chart opposite.

When your child first starts taking Macrologols it may take some time to get to the right dose and your healthcare professional may suggest you adjust the dose, depending on the frequency and consistency of the poo your child is passing. For example if your child is taking one sachet and he/she starts to pass type 2 or 3 stools you may be advised to increase the Macrologol to two sachets per day. If your child starts to pass type 5 or 6 stools you may be advised to reduce the amount of Macrologol your child is taking.

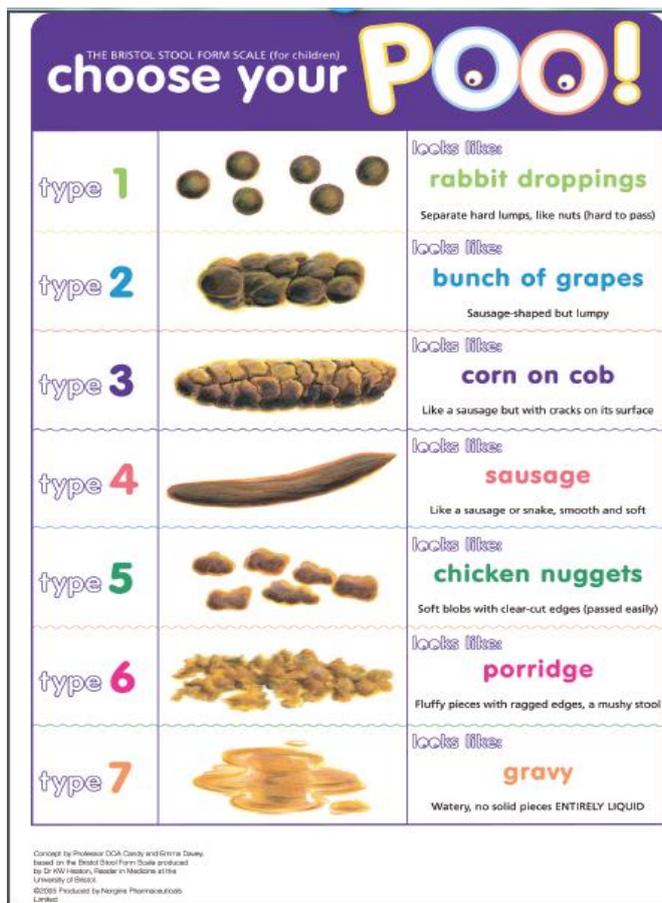
It may take a few days for the poos to become soft, or they may be loose for a few days. Your health care professional will advise, but it is usually a good idea to try and avoid changing the dose every day or your child may alternate between hard and loose poos. If poos are hard, or your child does not open their bowels at all for two or more days, you may be advised to give extra Macrologol. Some children may need a second different type of laxative as well – your health care professional will discuss this with you, if they think it is needed.

## Faecal Impaction

Some children are so constipated they cannot pass any poos at all, or cannot clear out all the poo that is there and are said to be 'impacted' or 'bunged up'. Often the first sign this has happened is that the child starts to have soiling accidents (pooing in their pants). This is not their fault, but is a sign they need laxatives to treat the problem. Your health care professional will be able to give you advice about this.

## Treating impaction

It is important that all the poo is emptied out of the bowel, otherwise the soiling will continue and the constipation will not get better. To do this your child will have to take larger doses of Macrologol than are used for constipation.



Your doctor or nurse will tell you how many sachets your child needs to take, but they usually start at one or two sachets per day and increase this by two sachets every day, or every other day, up to 8 or 12 sachets per day (sometimes called a disimpaction regime).

It usually takes at least 2-3 days for the Macrogols to start to work, so by day three you may start to notice a change in your child's bowel movements. The higher doses of Macrogol will be continued until your doctor or nurse advises you to start to reduce the dose. The number of days your child will need to stay on the higher doses will depend on how long it takes for them to completely empty out their bowel and for all the poo to be really runny and watery. This could be between 5-7 days, although it could take longer.

Your child will then reduce the Macrogol to what is called a 'maintenance' dose, which they may have to continue for several months until everyone is sure the constipation has completely resolved and will not come back again (relapse). The usual maintenance dose is approximately half the disimpaction dose and may need to be adjusted according to your child's progress. Your health care professional will advise you about this.

You should not stop giving your child Macrogols suddenly, but should reduce the dose gradually over a long period. Your healthcare professional will advise you on how to do this.

## Further advice

For further advice contact your health care professional.

For further information contact Bladder and Bowel UK

Tel: 0161 607 8219

Email: [bladderandboweluk@disabledliving.co.uk](mailto:bladderandboweluk@disabledliving.co.uk)

Bladder and Bowel UK, working under the umbrella of Disabled Living, provides impartial advice and information regarding resources, products and services for children and adults with bladder and bowel problems. For further information about our services and resources visit our website at [www.bladderandboweluk.co.uk](http://www.bladderandboweluk.co.uk)



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