

frequently asked questions about MiraLAX®

what is MiraLAX®?

MiraLAX® is a brand name for polyethylene glycol (PEG) 3350 a medication used to treat constipation. The medication works by pulling water into the intestines, which softens/squishes the stool. Other medications can also be added to help your child push the stool out. PEG 3350 can take 24 hours (or more) to work, so don't expect an immediate effect.

There are no reports to suggest that your child will become dependent on this medication to have normal bowel movements. There is no effect on the nerves or muscles within your child's gut.

Regarding side effects, PEG 3350 is well tolerated in children, but may cause loose, watery, or more frequent bowel movements. Commonly reported side effects of this medication include nausea, bloating, cramping, or gas.

is there a generic formulation available?

PEG 3350 can easily be found by its generic name- polyethylene glycol 3350/PEG 3350, as well as various other brand and store-brand names, and it is available without a prescription. Other commonly used brand names of this medication available in the United States are GlycoLax, Lax-A-Day and RestoraLAX.

how should I give this medicine to my child?

Follow the instructions provided by your child's provider. PEG 3350 is often given once a day, but your provider may order for it to be given more or less frequently. It is very important that you follow the instructions provided because failure to do so could result in the unsuccessful treatment of your child's constipation.

Let your provider know if it does not seem to be working or if it is resulting in watery bowel movements, because the dose may need to be adjusted.

how should I mix PEG 3350?

PEG 3350 is available in a powder formulation and can be easily dissolved into your child's favorite iced or hot clear liquid drink (i.e., juice, water, tea, electrolyte sports drink, etc.). Generally, 1 capful (17 grams) is mixed in 8 ounces of clear fluid. It should be noted that PEG 3350 does not mix well in milk.

is this safe to be given over long periods of time?

It is very common for providers to prescribe this medication for children for as long as many months or years and there have been no reports of any serious complications or side effects.

how effective is this medicine in treating my child's constipation?

The effectiveness of PEG 3350 in treating constipation in children has been supported by several randomized controlled trials (these types of trials are considered the "gold standard" in assessing how well a medication works). It has been shown to be more effective than placebo (sugar pill) and other laxatives, such as lactulose and milk of magnesia.

Is there anyone that shouldn't take this medication?

PEG 3350 should be used with caution in patients with certain medical problems including but not limited to electrolyte (salt) imbalances, kidney problems, seizure disorders, or with certain gastrointestinal problems including gastrointestinal obstruction, toxic megacolon, or bowel perforation. You should let your provider know if you are concerned about any of these conditions. The long-term effect of taking PEG 3350 is not known in children with chronic intestinal inflammation or injury. PEG 3350 should also be used with caution in patients who are pregnant or taking digoxin (a medicine for heart disease).