

Constipation Risk

This document summarises the basis for the guidance on treatment induced constipation management provided for medical oncology regimens in the ACT-NOW Systemic Anti-Cancer Therapy Regimen Library (SRL).

Constipation risk value options for the SRL:

- [Laxatives are usually prescribed](#)
- [Consider prescribing laxatives for this treatment](#)
- [Variable](#)

Guidance

Laxatives are usually prescribed

- Laxatives are included in all regimens containing a vinca alkaloid and multi-day 5HT₃ antagonists (e.g. BEP).
- For other systemic anti-cancer therapy (SACT), it is included if the risk of constipation necessitates the patient to have a pre-emptive supply of laxatives for self-mediation. The relevant NZ Datasheet (or if no NZ Datasheet, relevant product information), eviQ, and/or other relevant reference sources are used to define risk.
- The default laxative prescription is included within the SRL regimen definition as:
docusate sodium + sennoside B (Laxsol®), two tablets at night when required.

Consider prescribing laxatives for this treatment

- To guide that laxatives may be recommended based on clinical factors of a particular patient or for regimens
 - when constipation may occur in some patients, but a prescription for a laxative is not pre-emptively provided, or
 - when both constipation or diarrhoea may occur, and patients may require either anti-diarrhoeals or laxatives depending on symptoms.
- No default medications are included within the regimen definition.
- Explanatory notes may be included under the Supportive Care Factors section of the regimen if required, e.g. Constipation/Diarrhoea risk: [SACT medication] may cause constipation or diarrhoea. Monitor gastrointestinal symptoms.

Variable

- Used in complex regimens which have different requirements for different cycles.
- Explanatory notes are included under the Supportive Care Factors section of the regimen.
- The recommended pre-emptive laxative prescription is included within the regimen definition as per “Laxatives are usually prescribed” above in those cycles where that is appropriate.

Each cancer type working group chair has the final decision as to the requirement of laxatives within an SRL regimen.

References

1. PDQ Supportive and Palliative Care Editorial Board. Gastrointestinal Complications (PDQ®): Health Professional Version. 2023 Aug 24. In: PDQ Cancer Information Summaries [Internet]. Bethesda (MD): National Cancer Institute (US); 2002-. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK65768/>

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