

# GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING THE NATURAL BOWEL CARE PROGRAM<sup>©</sup>

## RESIDENT FOCUSED CARE

1. Identify at least one staff member as a champion for the NATURAL BOWEL CARE PROGRAM<sup>©</sup> program within the facility.
2. Build excitement about the benefits which residents in other facilities have experienced. Stories and statistics can help to build interest by presenting positive outcomes.
3. Build a team of key personnel who are interested in replacing pharmaceuticals for bowel care with a food focused program. There may be only two or three people to start, but the team should eventually include the Director of Care (or Assistant DoC), Charge Nurse / Med Nurse, Pharmacy Representative, Recreation Facilitator, Dietary Supervisor / Manager and Dietitian / head cook, Physician (as appropriate) or representative, and in some facilities the Administrator (as appropriate) or assistant.
4. Review the current bowel care protocol and identify where changes need to be made to implement a natural bowel care protocol. Some facilities switch all bowel care meds from routine to PRN. Those facilities which do not switch carefully monitor the residents for changes in bowel function.
5. Review current fluid management protocol and identify where this could be modified or improved.
6. Identify individual resident's activity level and see if there are opportunities to modify programs for less active residents, especially those who will be involved in the trial.
7. Determine the best route through which to provide 2 Tbsp of flax flour to the residents. This may be in cereal, yogurt or a beverage, but may be mixed into apple sauce and provided by the med nurse. It may also be included in a variety of foods throughout the day.
8. Make some muffins or cookies and provide these to the staff. Promote the program to the staff.
9. Start a small trial project with 15 to 20, or other convenient segment, of the residents with a tracking and review mechanism included.
10. After the first week, review the process and adjust the delivery method if required. Track the results.
11. Track results for the next 3 weeks. At the end of the first month, review the results. There should be a significant reduction in the number of meds required for bowel care.  
Discuss the results and review any issues which have come up during the trial phase. If there have been challenges with the implementation, take time to resolve these before moving forward. If the results are weak, carefully consider the residents involved. They may be a group which already has a low or irregular requirement for bowel care meds, they may have been using the meds for long enough that it will take additional time for results to become apparent, they may have been inconsistent in eating the flax flour, there may be some non-supportive conversations among other resident and / pr staff which are influencing their attitude toward the program, there may be too little emphasis on a fluid intake and exercise, they may have been overly stressed by something happening in their environment (including the new protocol!). Review each component of this GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING THE NATURAL BOWEL CARE PROGRAM<sup>©</sup>
12. If things have gone well, discuss expansion of the program to other residents.

*'As easy as eating'*<sup>©</sup>