

Evidence based treatment algorithm for Faecal Incontinence

Diagnosis and clinical assessment:

- History taking (assessment of bowel habit, severity, associated complaints etc.)
- Abdominal and anorectal examination

Refer to (inter)national guidelines for:

- Colorectal cancer
- Inflammatory bowel disease¹
- Rectal prolapse

Yes
Suspected presence of underlying organic pathology?

No
Have diarrhoea and constipation been ruled out as a cause for FI?

If predominant symptom is diarrhoea or constipation, treat accordingly with loperamide, bulking agent, cholestyramine or laxatives respectively prior to trying other treatment options

At all points in the treatment pathway, order of treatment and approach should be decided through shared decision making, taking into account patient preferences, availability of procedures and fitness for procedures.

First line treatment:

- Education incl. behavioural advice (i.e. toilet routine/bowel training)
- Dietary adjustments (e.g. high fibre, low caffeine, FODMAP)
- Lifestyle adjustments (i.e. smoking cessation, weight loss)
- Absorbent products
- Skin barrier creams
- Pelvic floor muscle exercises with or without biofeedback
- Stool bulking agents (e.g. fibre)
- Anti-diarrheal medication (e.g. loperamide)

If available, a multidisciplinary approach is preferred.

Legend

- Low level of evidence
- Very low level of evidence
- Expert opinion

Second line: non-surgical interventions:

- Percutaneous posterior tibial nerve stimulation
- Transanal irrigation
- Anal inserts

Second line: surgical interventions:

- Sacral neuromodulation
- Bulking agents
- Sphincteroplasty
- Stoma

¹Refer to European Crohn's and Colitis Organisation (ECCO) guidelines

<https://www.ecco-ibd.eu/publications/ecco-guidelines-science.html>

²Refer to consensus paper by the International Anorectal Physiology working group(1) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6028941/>

³Use of Diagnostic tests should be decided through shared decision making, taking into account patient preferences, availability of tests and fitness for diagnostic procedures

⁴See table 1 for the complete list of diagnostic tools which could be considered