

Distal Intestinal Obstruction Syndrome

Distal Intestinal Obstruction Syndrome (DIOS) is a complication of CF. It occurs when faecal material and intestinal contents stick to the lining of the intestines and cause a blockage.

Symptoms

Symptoms can be similar to constipation, however, in confirmed DIOS there is usually a complete blockage of the bowel.

Symptoms of DIOS can include:

- A hard mass on the right side of the abdomen
- Cramps
- Abdominal pain
- Bloating
- Hard stools
- Reduced bowel movements
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea and vomiting

DIOS needs to be diagnosed with an abdominal x-ray.

Causes

DIOS often occurs with a change in diet, not taking enough pancreatic enzymes or salt, illness, exacerbation and/or dehydration in hot weather. This causes contents of the bowel to become thicker and stickier, leading to a blockage.

If you were born with a meconium ileus or have had previous episodes of DIOS, then you are at an increased risk.



Treatment

You may be prescribed laxatives or stool softening medications by your CF care team. Extra fluids will also be required by increasing drinks.

Severe cases of DIOS require hospitalisation. Treatments will likely include a nasogastric tube and an intravenous line for extra fluids.

Enemas may be used and you will be given large-volume medications to help clear your bowel.

If you have previously experienced DIOS it can be really helpful to learn to recognise and treat symptoms early to prevent another episode.

Useful Tips

- Make sure your enzymes are correctly matched to your fat intake.
- Ensure adequate fluid intake to prevent dehydration (8-10 glasses of water a day).
- Increase your fluid intake during the warmer weather and when exercising.
- Ensure adequate salt intake, particularly in warm weather.
- Include adequate fibre in your diet.

Useful Resources

- [DIOS for Adults](#) (NEMO)
- [Use the Right Gastrointestinal Medications](#) (CF Foundation)
- [CFWA Factsheets](#)

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