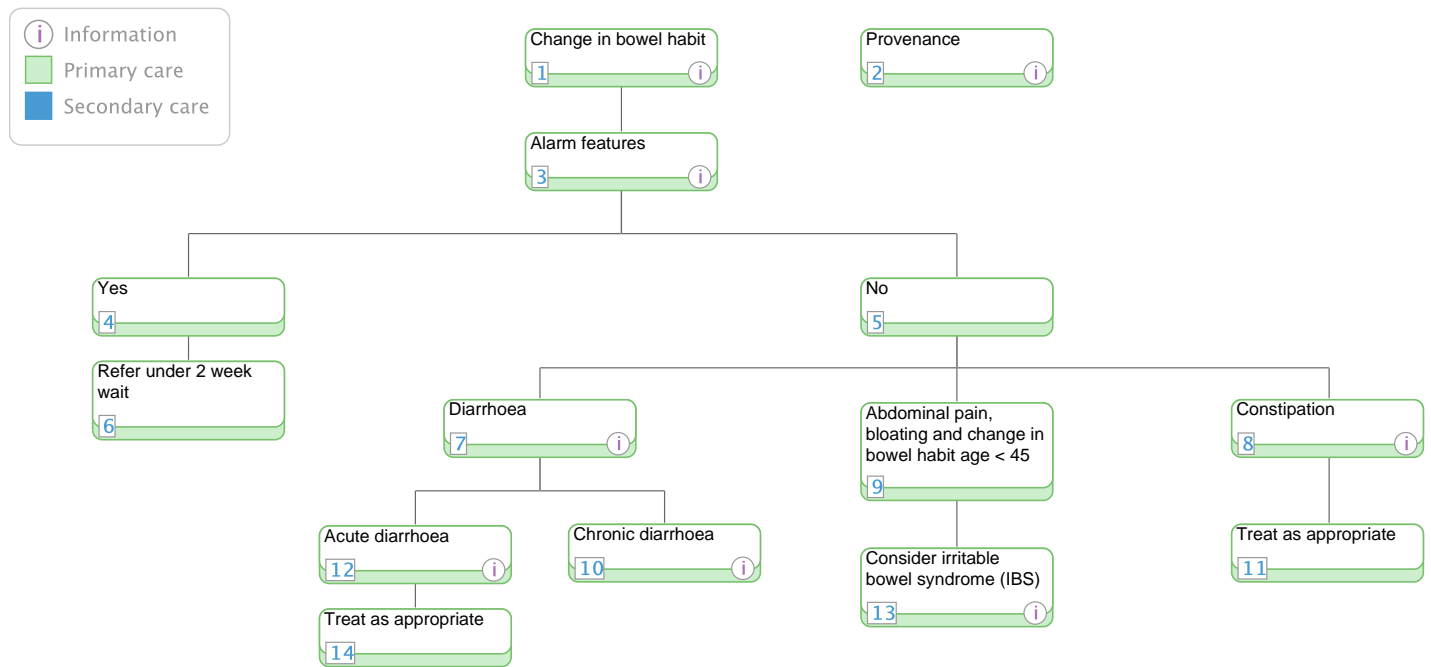


# Change in bowel habit

Medicine > Gastroenterology > Diarrhoea in adults - draft



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## 1 Change in bowel habit

Quick info:

in adults

## 2 Provenance

Quick info:

Last updated 17th Nov 2011

Authors:

Dr J Huddy GPSI gastro

Drs Michell, Murray, Hussaini, Dalton, Beckly, Fortun, Stableforth. Consultant Gastroenterologists, Royal Cornwall Hospital, 2011

## 3 Alarm features

Quick info:

Refer urgently those who have a high clinical suspicion of GI cancer or IBD

Lower GI 2 week wait referral criteria:

- Definite palpable right sided abdominal mass probably involving large bowel
- Definite *intraluminal (not pelvic)* rectal mass
- Unexplained iron deficiency anaemia with
  - Hb < 11g/dl in men
  - Hb < 10g/dl in non-menstruating women
- 40-60 yrs old with *persistent* (>6 weeks) rectal bleeding **and** a change to looser / more frequent stools
- 60 yrs or over with persistent (> 6 weeks) rectal bleeding (in absence of anal symptoms) **and / or** change to looser / more frequent stools

NB Constipation is not an alarm symptom

A recent audit of lower GI 2 week referrals to RCH demonstrated that 35% of referrals did not meet the following clinical criteria - this has knock on effects to non-2 week urgent referrals

If symptoms are sinister but do not fit the 2 week criteria please refer urgently via Choose and Book

Reference:

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). Referral guidelines for suspected cancer. London: 2005.

## 7 Diarrhoea

Quick info:

Diarrhoea may be defined as the abnormal passage of 3 or more loose or liquid stools per day

Reference

British Society of Gastroenterology. Guidelines for the investigation of chronic diarrhoea 2003

## 8 Constipation

Quick info:

- straining at stool
- excessively hard stools
- unproductive urges
- infrequency and a sense of incomplete evacuation

## 10 Chronic diarrhoea

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## Quick info:

- diarrhoea lasting more than 4 weeks

See diarrhoea page

## 12 Acute diarrhoea

### Quick info:

- usually subsides within 7 days
- defined as chronic when persists over 4 weeks

## 13 Consider irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)

### Quick info:

IBS should be considered in those with

**Abdominal pain**

**Bloating**

**Change in bowel habit**

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Medicine > Gastroenterology > Diarrhoea in adults - draft

## Key Dates

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## Evidence summary for Change in bowel habit

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