**TREATMENT GUIDELINES FOR HEALTH STAFF**

**CONSTIPATION**

Authorized health and wellness staff may treat constipation as follows:

1. Educate student about diet and the importance of fiber (increase dietary fiber to 20 to 35 grams per day). High fiber foods include: beans, whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables. In addition, reduce foods that have low or no fiber: cheese, meat, processed foods.
2. Encourage an increase in water intake: 8 full glasses of 8 oz of water daily.
3. Educate about the importance of exercise. Lack of physical activity is associated with constipation.
4. Review medications as many medications can cause constipation as a side effect.
5. Encourage regular bowel habits by advising sitting on the toilet for 10 minutes

twice daily (especially after breakfast).

1. Many people will respond to lifestyle changes alone. If further intervention is necessary – implement short term treatment (not to exceed three days) with ONE of the following medications:
   1. Miralax 17 gm (1 capful) orally daily
   2. Bisacodyl (Dulcolax) 5-10 mg in a single daily dose orally or 10 mg in a single dose by rectal suppository
   3. Milk of magnesia 30 cc (2 tbsp) orally at bedtime
   4. Mineral oil 30 cc (2 tbsp) orally twice daily (refrigeration may improve palatability)
2. May start fiber supplement to reduce risk of recurrence with one of the following: barley malt (barley cereal, Maltsupex); cellulose (Citrucel); psyllium (Metamucil, Fibercon) 1-2 rounded teaspoonfuls or 1-2 packets 1-2 times daily.

# WHEN TO REFER TO CENTER PHYSICIAN

* If student is on a prescribed medication that causes constipation. Dosage may need to be adjusted or medication changed if the problem persists.
* If the student reports failure of the above treatment regimen to resolve the constipation within 48 hours.
* If the student has vomiting, abdominal pain or fever.
* If the student experiences rectal bleeding or hemorrhoids are present.