

GP BULLETIN: A NEWSLETTER FOR GPs BY HEALTHWAY MEDICAL

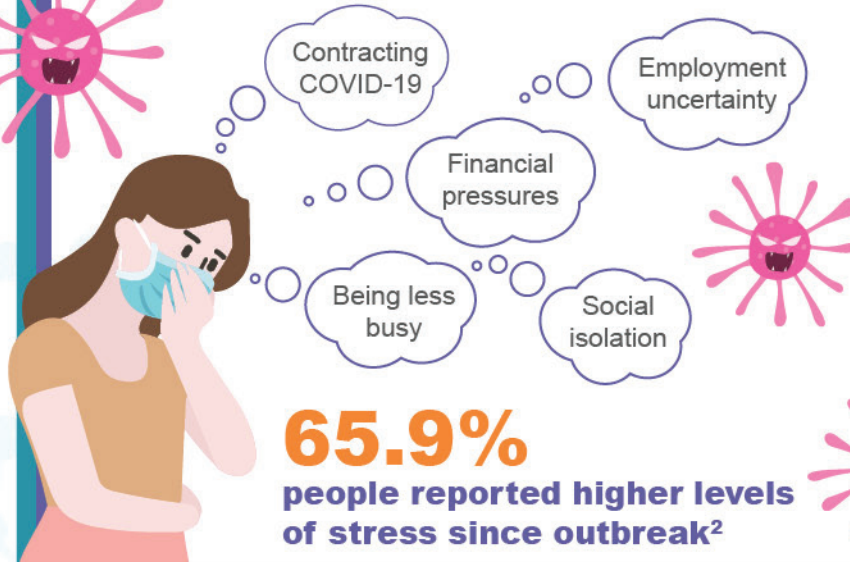


MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ARISING DURING THE COVID-19 CIRCUIT BREAKER PERIOD

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COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant mental health morbidity during the circuit breaker period¹



MANAGING COVID -19 RELATED MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN CLINICAL PRACTICE

MAY PRESENT WITH³

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Distress
- Insomnia



Counselling⁴



Offer suggestions for stress management and coping.

Self-care⁴



Advice on interventions to promote wellness and coping

Medications⁴



Use of appropriate psychotropic medications

Referral⁴



Referral to psychologists, counsellors and psychiatrists at the right instance.



Key messages:

- COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant emotional distress and mental health problems⁴
- Mental health issues need to be identified and addressed as a part of the pandemic response⁴

References

1. Psychology, podiatry and other allied health services re-classified as essential under COVID-19 circuit breaker: MOH. [Internet] Available at: <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/singapore/coronavirus-covid-19-health-essential-services-therapy-rehab-12683960> Accessed Aug 6, 2020; 2. The other COVID-19 crisis: Mental health. [Internet] Available at: <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/confronting-mental-health/> Accessed Aug 6, 2020; 3. Chakraborty N. The COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on mental health. *Prog Neurol Psychiatry*. 2020 Apr;24(2):21-4; 4. Pfefferbaum B, North CS. Mental health and the Covid-19 pandemic. *NEJM*. 2020 Apr 13.

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CONSTIPATION MANAGEMENT DURING THE COVID-19 CIRCUIT BREAKER

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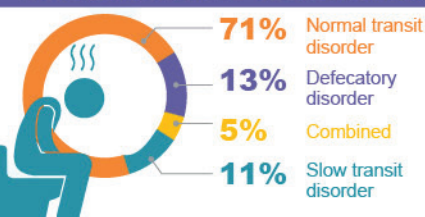
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COVID-19 circuit breaker reduced physical activity, which is an important etiological factor for functional constipation.¹

Diagnosis of chronic constipation should not be based solely on frequency of stool. Symptoms of constipation seen in many patients should also be taken into account.²

e.g. straining, sensation of stool being stuck and incomplete emptying

Percentage incidence of constipation based on the pathology



BRISTOL STOOL CHART

	Type 1	Separate hard lumps	Very constipated
	Type 2	Lumpy and sausage like	Slightly constipated
	Type 3	A sausage shape with cracks in the surface	Normal
	Type 4	Like a smooth, soft sausage or snake	Normal
	Type 5	Soft blobs with clear-cut edges	Lacking fibre
	Type 6	Mushy consistency with ragged edges	Inflammation
	Type 7	Liquid consistency with no solid pieces	Inflammation

The Bristol Stool Chart allows patients to identify their stool form. Stool form correlates with the whole-gut transit better than stool frequency.³ Patients reporting Bristol stool type 1 to 3 should be assessed for other symptoms of constipation.²

MANAGEMENT OF CONSTIPATION

Diagnose



Detailed history, clinical examination and digital rectal examination. Colonoscopy, abdominal imaging and blood investigations to exclude other causes.²

Lifestyle



Advice on water intake, increased dietary fibre and exercise.²

Medications



Use of appropriate bulking agents, osmotic agents or stimulant laxatives.²

Referral



Non-responsive cases may benefit from biofeedback and behavioural therapy.²

Key messages:

- Prolonged physical inactivity plays a role in constipation.¹
- Diagnosis of chronic constipation should take into account presence of symptoms, and not only frequency of stools.²

References

1. Iovino P, Chiarioni G, Bilancio G, et al. New onset of constipation during long-term physical inactivity: a proof-of-concept study on the immobility-induced bowel changes. *PLoS One*. 2013 Aug 20;8(8):e72608; 2. Gwee KA, Ghoshal UC, Gonlachanvit S, et al. Primary care management of chronic constipation in Asia: the ANMA chronic constipation tool. *J Neurogastroenterol Motil*. 2013 Apr;19(2):149; 3. Amarengo G. Bristol stool chart: prospective and monocentric study of "stools introspection" in healthy subjects. *Prog Urol*. 2014 Sep;24(11):708-13.

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