

This quick view provides very brief information from the ONS PEP resources. Full ONS PEP information for this topic and description of the categories of evidence are located at <http://www.ons.org/Research/PEP/Topics> and Eaton, L.H., & Tipton, J.M. (Eds.), (2009), *Putting evidence into practice: Improving oncology patient outcomes*, Pittsburgh, PA: Oncology Nursing Society. **Users should refer to these resources for full dosages, references, and other essential information about the evidence.**

Definition and incidence: Diarrhea is an abnormal increase in the liquidity and frequency of stools. The prevalence of diarrhea can range between 50%–80% of patients receiving chemotherapy.

Evidence-Based Interventions for Diarrhea

LIKELY TO BE EFFECTIVE

- Loperamide
- Somatostatin analog (octreotide acetate)
- Oral opiates
- **For prevention of radiation-induced diarrhea:** psyllium fiber supplementation; probiotic supplementation, including VSL#3[®] (VSL Pharmaceuticals), *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, and *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*

BENEFITS BALANCED WITH HARMS

- Amifostine infusion (with 5-fluorouracil and calcium folinate infusion in colorectal)
- Neomycin (for prevention of irinotecan induced diarrhea)

EFFECTIVENESS NOT ESTABLISHED

- **For prevention of irinotecan-induced diarrhea:** oral alkalization, budesonide, charcoal, cholestyramine (levofloxacin)
- **For prevention of chemotherapy-induced diarrhea:** probiotics, glutamine
- **For treatment of chemotherapy-induced diarrhea:** octreotide and long-acting octreotide, glutamine
- **For treatment of radiation-induced diarrhea:** antioxidants (vitamins E and C)

EFFECTIVENESS UNLIKELY

- **For prevention of radiation-induced diarrhea:** sulfasalazine; selenium supplementation
- **For treatment of radiation-induced diarrhea:** pentosan polysulfate (Elmiron[®], Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceuticals, Inc.)

NOT RECOMMENDED FOR PRACTICE

- Sucralfate for prevention of radiation-induced diarrhea is not recommended.

EXPERT OPINION

- Tincture of opium (e.g., paregoric)
- **Evaluation of dietary intake and dietary strategies:**
 - Strategies include consumption of sufficient fluid; small frequent meals; liquids such as Gatorade, diluted juices, and noncaffeinated drinks.
 - **Avoid:** foods high in insoluble fiber (raw fruits and vegetables, skins, seeds, legumes), greasy and fried foods, lactose, caffeine, alcohol, hyperosmotic liquids
 - **Include:** High soluble fiber- or pectin-containing foods; low insoluble fiber foods such as rice, noodles, bananas, white toast, skinned turkey or chicken, fish, mashed potatoes