

Stimulant Laxatives: Bisacodyl and Its Corrosive Nature

Stimulant Laxatives (e.g. Senna, Bisacodyl)

These medicines work by irritating the lining of the bowel to cause contractions of the bowel muscles. This will directly lead to the passing of a motion and therefore some relief from constipation. However, because of the way in which they work they may cause cramping and gripping pains in the stomach which can make symptoms seem worse. Also, your bowel can become reliant on this type of product and as such they should only be used occasionally. It has also come to light recently that some of the most popular laxatives may have been causing bowel problems following long term and regular usage, this has caused regulatory bodies to withdraw many laxatives from the market.

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Bisacodyl

Bisacodyl whether taken orally or as a suppository is a stimulant laxative. Stimulant laxatives function by irritating the lining of the intestine wall. The body seeks to eliminate the irritant by increasing the muscle contractions that move along the stool mass.

To appreciate the corrosive nature of bisacodyl one must only look at the precautions taken when manufacturing bisacodyl products. When working with bisacodyl powders, all production personnel must wear suits complete with hood, shield and a breathing apparatus. Any direct contact with the skin or eyes requires immediate flushing of the affected area with water. It's this corrosive nature that renders bisacodyl products unsuitable for long term bowel training programs. Common side effects include rectal irritation, GI bleeding and obstruction, diarrhea, significant abdominal cramping, cathartic colon and fecal impaction.

