

Milk of Magnesia (MOM) There Are Multiple Concentrations

What is it?

Milk of Magnesia (MOM – magnesium hydroxide) is an over-the-counter medication that can be used to treat constipation and acid indigestion. MOM relieves constipation by promoting water retention in the intestines, which increases peristalsis (wave-like contractions that propel GI contents through the intestines) and stimulates bowel evacuation. MOM also improves acid indigestion by reducing the amount of stomach acid.

Why do we need it?

Milk of Magnesia is a commonly used medication for older adults, especially those in long term care facilities

- Constipation is common in adults older than 60 years, and symptoms occur in up to 50% of nursing home patients. Management of constipation in older adults:
 - Initial management should include lifestyle modifications (increase fiber, fluid intake, scheduled toileting)
 - Initial pharmacological treatment should be an osmotic laxative (MOM, lactulose, Miralax, etc.)

MOM is packaged in multiple concentrations. **Administration of the incorrect concentration may lead to patient receiving too small or too large of a dose.** Too small of a dose and the patient's constipation will not be resolved. Too large of a dose and the patient may develop severe diarrhea and dehydration.

Regulation

- F-tag 760 of §483.45(f)(2) (Pharmacy Services) of the State Operations Manual (SOM) charges facilities with ensuring that its residents are free of any significant medication errors.

Dosing and Available Concentrations

- The indicated dosage of MOM for occasional constipation is 2,400mg to 4,800mg once daily at bedtime or in divided doses
- All doses should be followed by 8 ounces of water

Available Concentrations:

Product	Concentration	Indicated Volume/Day
Magnesium Hydroxide	400 mg/5mL	30 to 60 mL/day
Magnesium Hydroxide	1,200 mg/5mL	5 to 10 mL/day
Milk of Magnesia Concentrate	2,400 mg/10mL	5 to 10 mL/day

How to avoid patient harm and/or survey citations

- ALWAYS verify the concentration and that the dose prepared matches the prescriber order
- ALWAYS administer at bedtime or in divided doses, unless otherwise directed by prescriber
- ALWAYS follow each dose with 8 ounces of water

Sources

- Lexicomp Monograph: Magnesium Hydroxide
- Mounsey A, Raleigh M, Wilson A. Management of Constipation in Older Adults. Am Fam Physician. 2015 Sep 15;92(6):500-4. PMID: 26371734.