

A Constipated Child

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'Amelia'

Date of birth: 25 April 2007

[I had seen Amelia ([not her real name) numerous times previously for recurrent otitis media.]

Her mother brought Amelia to see me on 10 April 2009, with the chief complaint of holding her stool. She had always had the tendency to become constipated before the onset of acute illnesses, with normal return of bowel function afterwards. This time, after an episode of acute gastroenteritis, she had become constipated for two weeks, going four and five days without stool, despite increase fiber in diet, prunes, fruit, etc. She would eventually pass a hard stool only after use of a glycerin suppository, then revert back to the pattern described as follows: she would obviously feel an urge, would cross her legs forcefully, grunt and become red in the face, and resist the passage of stool. She would nurse frequently at night. "All night," her mother said. Her mother was working as a teacher and, on her arrival home in the evening, Amelia would cry and become quite clingy, angry and demanding. She liked to put things away in her room spontaneously; she became instantly angry if her desires were frustrated.

Before this problem began, Amelia used her potty chair once for a bowel movement, took a look at the stool in the container, said, "Uh-oh-uh-oh!" emphatically, and refused to use the potty chair again.

My reasoning in this case was as follows: She was

a child who had strong separation anxiety, manifested by anger and insistence, coupled with what seemed like voluntary retention of stool, for some reason. Many children will retain stool if its passage is too painful, and this was definitely a consideration. The other thing that occurred to me, with her somewhat fastidious nature and her reaction to seeing stool in her potty chair, was that she may have been resisting making a (visible) "mess." It was somewhat speculative, but based on some solid data about her. Because of this, and the great separation anxiety, manifested with anger and insistence, I prescribed *Arsenicum album* 200C.

Within a day, she began having three to four stools a day without resistance, and within a week, she had become much less anxious and demanding with her mother.

About the Author: Nick Nossaman, MD, DHT has been practicing homeopathy for 16 years in Denver, Colorado. He is past-President of the National Center for Homeopathy and the American Institute of Homeopathy and a member of the Rhus Tox group of Homeopatia Internationalis.

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