

You (or your loved one) are taking a medication called bisacodyl (brand name Dulcolax®). Bisacodyl is a laxative that helps treat or prevent constipation.

Bisacodyl usually comes as a tablet that is swallowed. It also comes as a suppository or enema, which is inserted in the rectum. Bisacodyl may be included in a “kit” with other medications to treat new or worsening symptoms. Make sure to follow the hospice team’s instructions carefully when using bisacodyl.

Possible side effects of bisacodyl:

Seek emergency medical help in the event of any of the following signs of a severe allergic reaction:

- Swelling of the face, lips, tongue or throat
- Hives (red, raised, itchy skin)
- Difficulty breathing

Contact the hospice team immediately if you are experiencing loose or watery stools (diarrhea) or have severe abdominal pain.

Potential less serious side effects of using bisacodyl may include:

- Abdominal cramps (mild)
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Rectal irritation (burning)

Other things to be aware of when using bisacodyl:

- Do not swallow bisacodyl suppositories. Remember to remove the suppository from its outer covering before inserting it in the rectum.
- Contact the hospice team if your symptoms do not improve or get worse.

Reference: Clinical Pharmacology accessed 1.25.2024