**polyethylene glycol** (po-lee-eth-e-len glyk-ole)


**Classification**
- Therapeutic: laxatives
- Pharmacologic: osmotics

**Pregnancy Category C**

**Indications**
- Treatment of occasional constipation.

**Action**
- Polyethylene glycol (PEG) in solution acts as an osmotic agent, drawing water into the lumen of the GI tract. **Therapeutic Effects:** Evacuation of the GI tract without water or electrolyte imbalance.

**Pharmacokinetics**
- **Absorption:** Nonabsorbable.
- **Distribution:** Unknown.
- **Metabolism and Excretion:** Excreted in fecal contents.
- **Half-life:** Unknown.

**TIME/ACTION PROFILE (bowel movement)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROUTE</th>
<th>ONSET</th>
<th>PEAK</th>
<th>DURATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>1–3 days</td>
<td>unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contraindications/Precautions**
- **Contraindicated in:** GI obstruction; Gastric retention; Toxic colitis; Megacolon; Bowel perforation.
- **Use Cautiously in:** Abdominal pain of uncertain cause, particularly if accompanied by fever. OB, Pedi: Safety not established.

**Adverse Reactions/Side Effects**
- **Derm:** urticaria.
- **GI:** abdominal bloating, cramping, flatulence, nausea.

**Interactions**
- **Drug-Drug:** None significant.

**Route/Dosage**
- **PO (Adults):** 17 g (heaping tablespoon) in 8 oz of water; may be used for up to 2 wk. **PO (Children 6 mo):** 0.5–1.5 g/kg daily, titrate to effect (maximum: 17 g/day).

**NURSING IMPLICATIONS**
- **Assess patient for abdominal distention, presence of bowel sounds, and usual pattern of bowel function.**
- **Assess color, consistency, and amount of stool produced.**

**Potential Nursing Diagnoses**
- Constipation (Indications)
- Diarrhea (Side Effects)

**Implementation**
- **Do not confuse Miralax (polyethylene glycol) with Mirapex (pramipexole).**
- **PO:** Dissolve powder in 8 oz of water prior to administration.

**Patient/Family Teaching**
- **Inform patient that 2–4 days may be required to produce a bowel movement. PEG should not be used for more than 2 wk.**
- **Inform patient to notify health care professional if unusual cramps, bloating, or diarrhea occurs.**

**Evaluation/Desired Outcomes**
- Soft, formed bowel movement.

Why was this drug prescribed for your patient?