



## **Week 5: Reflection on Learning**



NR602: Primary Care of the Childbearing and Childrearing Family

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Discuss the each of the following possible causes of a child with chronic constipation and the tests/labs needed to rule the diagnosis in or out.

**a. Constipation Present Since Birth or Early Infancy**

In cases of constipation present from birth or early infancy, a significant worry is Hirschsprung disease (HD), a congenital disorder characterized by the absence of ganglion cells in segments of the colon, resulting in impaired motility and blockage. Children with HD may experience chronic constipation that is not alleviated by conventional treatments, vomiting, abdominal distention, and delayed passage of meconium (more than 48 hours after delivery). As a structural and functional problem, HD must be detected early to prevent serious consequences like enterocolitis (Mulhem et al., 2022).

The definitive diagnostic procedure is a rectal suction biopsy, which will demonstrate the absence of ganglion cells in the submucosal and myenteric plexuses, frequently accompanied by elevated acetylcholinesterase activity. Initiating with a contrast enema can reveal a "transition zone" - a small piece of distal aganglionic tissue with a dilated colon near the colon's edge. In older children, anorectal manometry can serve as a screening tool to assess the absence of the rectoanal inhibitory reflex, which is lacking in