Table 5. Treatment management of chronic constipation in infants and children. Constipation treatment in childhood has 3 phases. The first phase aims to clear out hard, chronically accumulated stool (disimpaction) with oral use of osmotic agents and laxatives. The second phase aims to restore muscle tone to the sphincter by the use of stool softeners, hyperosmotic laxatives, non-absorbable salts or combinations. The third phase aims to restore regular bowel movements and to avoid relapses by cutting down laxative use and by increasing daily fiber and fluid intake[12,42,45,47].

Infants		
Juice consumption containing sorbitol diluted with water twice a day		
Syrup of plant origin and honey should be avoided		
Adequate dietary intake of fiber according to the age for infants older than 6 months of age		
Laxative administration (lactulose, lactitole, sorbitol) for infants older than 6 months of age		
Glycerine suppositories for occasional constipation		
Enemas avoidance		
Juice consumption containing sorbitol diluted with water twice a day		
Syrup of plant origin and honey should be avoided		
Children		
Phase I in constipation treatment for older children		
Target	Duration	Treatment*
Bowel emptying	1- 3 days	Per rectum: Phosphate enemas, Paraffin oil enemas, salt enemas Bisacodyl suppositories Per os: Paraffin oil, magnesium hydroxide, Magnesium citrate, lactulose, sorbitol, senna, bisacodyl
Phase II in constipation treatment for older children		
Target	Duration	Treatment*
Restore muscle tone stool softeners to the sphincter & Return of the gut diameter to its normal size	≥ 2-6 months	Paraffin oil Hyperosmotic laxatives: lactulose, lactitole, sorbitol Non-absorbable salts: magnesium hydroxide or combinations Macrogol Constipation diary Dietary instructions Toilet training
Phase III in constipation treatment for older children		
Target	Duration	Treatment*
Restore regular bowel movements & Relapse avoidance	≥ 4-6 months	Gradual laxative reduction Fluid intake Fiber intake

*On treatment failure: polyethylene glycol electrolyte solution.