CONSTIPATION
Intellectually and Developmentally Disabled Fatal Four

Definition — Constipation occurs when an individual has difficult or infrequent bowel movements. Constipation can lead to a blockage in the small or large intestine which prevents stool and gas from moving through in the usual way.

Why are individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at a high risk?
- Lack of mobility
- Diet (e.g. lack of fiber or liquid)
- Certain medications (e.g. antidepressants, antihistamines, calcium and iron supplements, narcotic pain medicine)

Signs & Symptoms
- Vomiting
- Bloated or hard stomach
- Decreased bowel sounds
- Behavioral outbursts
- Refusing meals
- Hard or small stools

Preventative Action Steps
- Increase the amount of fiber intake
- Increase liquid intake
- Increase activity
- Limit caffeine consumption
- Track and document bowel movements for individuals at risk

This information is for general guidance of best practices and is not intended to replace professional advice of a healthcare professional; dictate the care of a particular individual; or set a standard of care. Nor is this a complete list of measures a provider should take when delivering services.