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PHARMACOLOGY - III

UNIT 1

TOPIC :

- b. Drugs for constipation and diarrhoea.



Drugs for Constipation and Diarrhoea

Constipation

→ Constipation is a condition in which bowel movements become infrequent, difficult, or painful, usually associated with hard stools.

Causes of Constipation

- Low fiber diet
- Lack of water intake
- Physical inactivity
- Stress
- Certain drugs (opioids, iron, antacids)
- Intestinal disorders

Signs and Symptoms

- Hard stools
- Difficulty in passing stool
- Abdominal discomfort
- Bloating
- Reduced bowel movements

Drugs Used in Constipation (Laxatives/Purgatives)

→ Laxatives are drugs that promote bowel evacuation and relieve constipation.

Classification of Laxatives

1. Bulk Forming Laxatives

⇒ Absorb water and increase stool bulk.

Examples:

- Psyllium
- Bran
- Methylcellulose

2. Osmotic Laxatives

⇒ Draw water into intestine and soften stool.

Examples:

- Lactulose
- Magnesium hydroxide
- Polyethylene glycol

3. Stimulant Laxatives

⇒ Stimulate intestinal motility.

Examples:

- Senna
- Bisacodyl
- Castor oil

4. Stool Softeners (Emollients)

⇒ Soften feces by increasing water penetration.

Examples:

- Docusate sodium
- Liquid paraffin

5. Lubricant Laxatives

⇒ Lubricate intestine and stool.

Example:

- Mineral oil

Mechanism of Action & Uses

Drug/Class	Mechanism of Action	Uses
Bulk-forming laxatives	Increase stool bulk and water content	Chronic constipation
Osmotic laxatives	Retain water in intestine	Constipation, bowel preparation
Stimulant laxatives	Stimulate intestinal muscles	Severe constipation
Stool softeners	Soften stool	Painful defecation
Lubricants	Lubricate stool passage	Short-term constipation

Important Drugs

1. Lactulose

Mechanism

→ Osmotic action increases water in colon.

Uses

- Constipation
- Hepatic encephalopathy

Adverse Effects

- Flatulence
- Abdominal cramps

2. Senna

Mechanism

→ Stimulates intestinal motility.

Uses

- Acute constipation

Adverse Effects

- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea

Diarrhoea

→ Diarrhoea is the frequent passage of loose or watery stools.

Causes of Diarrhoea

- Infection (bacteria, viruses)
- Food poisoning
- Contaminated water
- Drug-induced diarrhea
- Intestinal diseases

Signs and Symptoms

- Loose stools
- Abdominal cramps
- Dehydration
- Weakness
- Nausea and vomiting

Drugs Used in Diarrhoea (Antidiarrheal Drugs)

Classification

1. Adsorbents

- ▲ Absorb toxins and bacteria.

Examples:

- Kaolin
- Pectin

2. Antimotility Drugs

- ▲ Reduce intestinal movement.

Examples:

- Loperamide
- Diphenoxylate

3. Antisecretory Drugs

- ▲ Reduce fluid secretion.

Example:

- Bismuth subsalicylate

4. Probiotics

- ▲ Restore normal intestinal flora.

Examples:

- Lactobacillus preparations

5. Oral Rehydration Therapy (ORT)

- Replaces lost water and electrolytes.

Mechanism of Action & Uses

Drug/Class	Mechanism of Action	Uses
Loperamide	Decreases intestinal motility	Acute diarrhea
Diphenoxylate	Slows bowel movement	Severe diarrhea
Bismuth subsalicylate	Reduces secretion and inflammation	Traveler's diarrhea
Probiotics	Restore intestinal flora	Antibiotic-associated diarrhea
ORS	Replaces fluids and electrolytes	Dehydration prevention

Important Drugs

1. Loperamide

Mechanism

- Acts on opioid receptors in intestine and decreases motility.

Uses

- Acute diarrhea
- Chronic diarrhea

Adverse Effects

- Constipation
- Drowsiness

2. Bismuth Subsalicylate

Mechanism

- Reduces intestinal secretion and inflammation.

Uses

- Traveler's diarrhea
- Mild diarrhea

Adverse Effects

- Black stools
- Nausea

Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS)

Composition

Contains:

- Sodium chloride
- Potassium chloride
- Glucose
- Sodium citrate

Importance

→ Prevents dehydration caused by diarrhea.

Precautions

In Constipation

- Increase water intake
- Eat fiber-rich diet
- Avoid overuse of laxatives

In Diarrhoea

- Maintain hydration
- Avoid contaminated food
- Use antibiotics only when prescribed

Advantages

Laxatives

- Relieve constipation
- Ease bowel movement

Antidiarrheal Drugs

- Reduce stool frequency
- Prevent dehydration

Disadvantages

Laxatives

- Electrolyte imbalance
- Dependence on prolonged use

Antidiarrheal Drugs

- Constipation

- May mask intestinal infection

