



## PIC QUESTION OF THE WEEK: 04/05/05

**Q:** A pediatrician called regarding two recent cases in which red colored stools were reported by mothers whose children were receiving cefdinir (Omnicef®). The infants (two and three months of age) were afebrile and did not have any signs of vomiting or diarrhea. Could this change in stool color result from use of the antibiotic?

**A:** Cefdinir (Omnicef®) is a third generation cephalosporin used for the treatment of otitis media, pharyngitis/tonsillitis, sinusitis, and uncomplicated skin infections. Antacids and iron supplements can decrease the absorption of cefdinir by 30-80% if given simultaneously with the antibiotic. Thus, the product labeling recommends that cefdinir be administered two hours before or after a dose of an iron supplement or multivitamins containing iron.

The manufacturer also states that the combination of iron and cefdinir sometimes results in brick-red stools. It is believed this is due to the formation of a non-absorbable complex that develops between cefdinir (or its metabolites) and iron in the gastrointestinal tract. This is not a cause for concern and therapy should be continued. Stools will return to normal when therapy is completed. These color changes do not appear to occur when iron supplements are combined with other cephalosporins. A published report in the Journal of Pediatrics presented two children (five months and six years of age) who developed reddish stools when treated with cefdinir while receiving iron-fortified formulas. Both cases resolved when cefdinir was discontinued. When exploring the internet, we identified several anecdotal reports describing this event. Even though this phenomenon has been well documented, some physicians still recommend a stool guaiac to rule out blood in the feces. This simple procedure can ease parents' minds and limit unnecessary laboratory tests.

### **References:**

- Nelson J. Red stools and Omnicef. J Pediatr 2000;136:853-4.
- Omnicef package insert. Abbott Park, IL: Abbott Labs;2003 Dec.

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