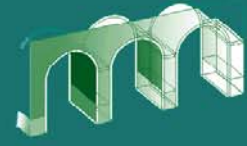


# BODY PACKER SYNDROME

## Management, Complications, Surgical Treatment

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### EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Together with an increasing incidence of cases, a new method of packaging was observed. The new type of packet (type 4) is resistant to rupture or leakage.

The incidence of intestine obstruction is around 5% in most series.

Obstruction level may be various from stomach to colon.

Our surveillance protocol has the lowest cost compatible with an early detection of complications.

Cocaine intoxication is a very rare event.

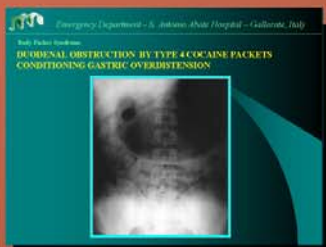
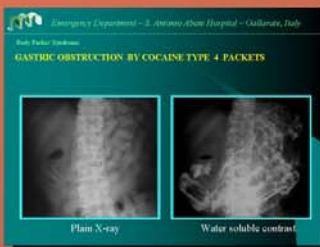
Out of pylorus impaction, requesting gastrotomy, intestinal occlusion may be solved with a gentle pulling of the packets until colon, without entering the intestine.



**METHODS OF COCAINE PACKAGING**

TYPE	ENVASAGE	CONTENT	LEAK	RESPIRA BILE
TYPE 1	Linen	Packet	100%	High
TYPE 2	Linen	Packet paraffin	100%	High
TYPE 3	Linen + aluminium	Packet paraffin or parafin	80%	Low
TYPE 4	Linen + paraffin or aluminium	Hardened cocaine paste	100%	Very low

Source: (18) (19) - (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (25) (26) (27) (28) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35) (36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42) (43) (44) (45) (46) (47) (48) (49) (50) (51) (52) (53) (54) (55) (56) (57) (58) (59) (60) (61) (62) (63) (64) (65) (66) (67) (68) (69) (70) (71) (72) (73) (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79) (80) (81) (82) (83) (84) (85) (86) (87) (88) (89) (90) (91) (92) (93) (94) (95) (96) (97) (98) (99) (100)



- OUR SURVEILLANCE PROTOCOL**
- ✓ X-ray plain film of the abdomen (initial control)
  - ✓ Check-up (blood parameters + ECG)
  - ✓ Packet type on first evacuation
  - ✓ X-ray plain film of the abdomen (control on symptoms)
  - ✓ Triage 8<sup>®</sup> (urinary test for cocaine on first symptoms)
  - ✓ X-ray plain film of the abdomen (final control)
  - ✓ Normal diet
  - ✓ No use of laxatives



**COCAINE TRANSPORT RESULTS**

PARAMETER	VALUE
BODY PACKERS	161
RECOVERED PACKETS	8981
MEAN PACKET NUMBER / PERSON	55.6
RANGE OF PACKETS/PERSON	1 to 121
MEAN WEIGHT OF COCAINE / PACKET	5.6 g
AMOUNT OF COCAINE	45 to 54 Kg
TOTAL HOSPITALIZATION TIME	763 days
MEAN HOSPITALIZATION TIME	4.7 days

**SURGICAL TREATMENT: RESULTS**

TYPE	No.	OPERATION	6-8 h postoperative	HOSPITALIZATION TIME
GASTROTOMY	8	GASTROTOMY	-	57 DAYS
PULLING	5	PULLING	-	54 DAYS
COLIC	1	PULLING	-	7 DAYS



**CONCLUSIONS**

- ✓ Type 4 packets represents a new method of packaging for international illicit traffic of cocaine, carrying the possibility to manage body packers more conservatively than in the past
- ✓ Our surveillance protocol showed to be safe and effective and can be proposed to lower hospital costs of body packers or to manage them safely on occasional observation
- ✓ Surgical approach to intestinal obstruction may be more conservative than in the past, since progression of the packets to colon or even to evacuation can be obtained safely without entering the intestine

**THE ROLE OF THE CASUALTY WARD, WHERE A SAFE AND LOWCOST SURVEILLANCE PROTOCOL MAY BE ADOPTED, SEEMS TO BE OF PIVOTAL IMPORTANCE FOR MANAGING THE INCREASING NUMBER OF BODY PACKERS.**