

Constipation

Constipation may result from chemotherapy, radiation therapy, inactivity, medication (especially pain medication), the disease itself or changes in your diet.

Diet:

1. Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads and cereals, dried fruits such as raisins, prunes, and apricots and nuts. If you have trouble chewing and swallowing these foods, try grating them or put them in a blender or food processor. Add raw fruit and vegetables to salads and casseroles.
2. Try high fiber snack foods such as sesame bread sticks, date-nut or prune bread, oatmeal cookies, fig newtons, date or raisin bars, granola and corn chips. Try natural “laxative-type” foods- bran, whole grain cereals, and prune juice.
3. Add 1 or 2 tablespoons of bran daily to cooked cereals, casseroles, eggs, baked goods, or eat it raw.
4. Drink at least 8-10 glasses of fluid a day. Prune juice is a good natural stimulant. Fluids will help prevent hard stools.

Activity:

1. Light, daily exercise is recommended to help maintain and stimulate regular bowel movements.
2. Try hot tea, coffee or lemon water, early in the morning or 1/2 to 1 hour before your normal time for a bowel movement.
3. To promote regularity, have a time set each day when you can sit on the commode quietly and uninterrupted.
4. Gently massage your abdomen from right to left while sitting on the toilet.
5. Report abnormal stools to your doctor. This includes stools that are difficult to pass or contain blood, diarrhea or green mucous.

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6. If you are undergoing treatment, check with your doctor before taking a laxative and/or stool softener.
7. Avoid frequent use of enemas. They can be harmful to the colon if used too often.
8. Be sure to check with the nurse or doctor if you need additional help.