

## Constipation Avoidance

Constipation is defined as infrequent bowel movements or the passage of hard stools, causing discomfort.

### Steps to prevent constipation:

Start with number 1 and move down the numerical steps until bowel movements are soft and regular.

1. *Drink 8-10 glasses of fluid per day*, including fruit juices. Eat a high fiber diet including raw fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, and whole grains. In addition, try the juice recipe below:

#### Juice recipe:

- 1 oz prune juice
- 1 oz apricot nectar
- 1 oz water
- 1 oz Karo® syrup

Mix in a pitcher and drink 4 oz. every day. Adjust the amount to softness and frequency of stool.

Fiber is important. Cereals such as Quaker Oatmeal Squares are high in fiber.

2. *Psyllium*, a bulk laxative made from the husks of seeds, is also a good first line option. It can be purchased over the counter; better known as Metamucil®. Take as directed once or twice a day, mixed with water. Psyllium can also lower cholesterol.
3. *Use a stool softener*: (Dioctyl sodium sulfosuccinate, DSS), Ducosate sodium 250 mg or 1 capsule orally; or Colace® 100 mg by mouth 2 times per day may be purchased without a prescription. Remember to keep up your fluids with juices and water as in Step 1.
4. Take a *laxative/stimulant* if you have no bowel movement for 3 days despite following steps 1 through 3 above.

Laxatives increase bowel activity so that stool moves down and out. Take Senokot® 2 tablets at night. This may be increased to 2 tablets 3 times per day as needed (6 tablets per day maximum).

5. If Senokot® 2 to 6 tabs per day do not work, add a Dulcolax® Suppository in the rectum the next morning.

*Caution:* These stronger laxatives can cause cramping.

6. If Dulcolax® doesn't result in a bowel movement; take Milk of Magnesia (MOM) 15-30 mls or Lactulose 30 mls (2 tsp). If you have no bowel movement within 3 hours, take another Dulcolax® suppository. If no results by evening, use a Fleet® enema.
7. If the above guideline does not work, or you are having increasing pain or cramping in your abdomen, call your physician.

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