

# Managing Constipation

Constipation is common when taking certain medications. Constipation is when you:

- Have fewer bowel movements than usual
- Have trouble having a bowel movement or pushing during bowel movements
- Have no bowel movement for more days than is usual for you

If you have a history of ulcerative colitis, Crohn's, diverticulitis or diverticulosis or chronic constipation please contact your Primary Care Provider if you become constipated.

## To help prevent constipation

There are things you can do to help prevent constipation:

- Eat a diet high in fiber or take a daily fiber supplement like Metamucil
- Try to drink at least 8 glasses of water each day
- Try natural laxatives like prune juice if possible

## If you have constipation

Taking a stool softener and laxative can make it easier to have a bowel movement. If you have constipation:

- Take a stool softener.
  - Take a stool softener like docusate (Colace) 100 mg by mouth 2 times a day- take 100 mg in the morning and 100 mg in the evening.
  - You should add fluids and increase or add a fiber supplement if the docusate doesn't help
- If the docusate doesn't help, add a laxative
  - Take 2 tablets of senna (Senokot) at night
  - If still no success, increase to 2 tablets in the morning and 2 more in the afternoon

## If your stool softener and laxative do not produce results

Sometimes adding other agents like Milk of Magnesia or Miralax can help. Follow the instructions provided on bottle.

**Please call the Neurosurgery and Spine office at 885-0011 if you have any questions regarding these directions.**

If you continue to be constipated, or at any time develop abdominal pain with constipation, call your Primary Care Physician's office. They may want to do some more testing to find out how to best treat your constipation.

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