



Information for You from Your Health Care Team

Constipation

What is Constipation?

- Constipation is difficult or painful bowel movements (BM) that may be hard and dry.
- Bowel movements occur less often than usual.

What causes constipation?

- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not eating enough fiber.
- No routine in bowel habits
- Some medicines and illnesses.
- Not exercising, being depressed.

If you have constipation you may:

- Not have had a bowel movement in the last couple of days.
- Have a very hard time pushing out your bowel movement.
- Have pain or bleeding during or after a bowel movement.
- Feel very bloated.
- Feel like you did not finish having your bowel movement.
- Feel sick to your stomach and not want to eat.



What can you do to prevent constipation?

- Eat a well-balanced, high fiber diet; this makes BMs larger and easier to pass.
- Good choices are fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain breads, oatmeal, bran cereal, and brown rice.
- Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses of water as well as 1 glass of fruit juice a day.
- Regular exercise is important. Walking is a good choice.
- There are many different medicines that can help your constipation. Your doctor will tell you which ones to take.
- Set aside a regular time each day for having a BM. The best time is after meals, especially breakfast. Sit at least 10 minutes, even if you do not have results.



Call your doctor if:

- You have constipation that lasts longer than 2 weeks.
- You have fever and belly pain with the constipation.
- You have bright red blood in your bowel movement.
- You have not been able to have a bowel movement in 3 days.

Speak up at any time if you have any questions or concerns