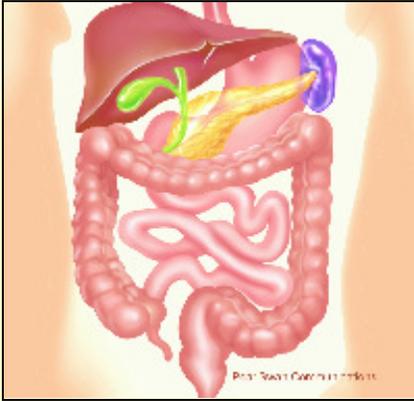


Patient Education Program

What You Should Know About Constipation



What is the perfect Bowel Movement?

The perfect bowel movement passes within seconds without pushing, straining or waiting for it to finish. It cleans easily, without messing the surrounding area. It does not cause pain, or bleeding.

How often should I have a Bowel Movement?

It would be best to have one bowel movement a day. But it is not abnormal to miss a day, or have several in one day. So long as it's painless, passes easily, and is not associated with abdominal cramps or bloating.

What is Constipation?

Constipation is when you struggle to pass stool.

- It may result in infrequent bowel movements.
- It may result in difficulty evacuating.

Both are considered 'constipation'.

Does Constipation harm me?

- Constipation causes hemorrhoids and fissures. If hemorrhoids and fissures become well-established, they can in turn, make constipation worse.
- It makes diverticular disease more likely.
- It commonly creates abdominal pains

What causes Constipation?

The common causes of constipation include:

- Insufficient Fiber
- Hormonal Imbalances
- Pain medications, iron therapy; cardiac meds
- Hemorrhoids, or Fissures (once established)
- Tumor blocking the bowel

What can I do to treat Constipation?

Normal - Mild	High fiber diet	Benefiber
Mild- Moderate	Psyllium Seed	Citrucel
Moderate- Severe	Miralax	Amitiza

It is best to start with a fiber supplement:
 Psyllium is a natural seed.
 It has been shown to lower your cholesterol.
 It can be used to lose weight.

Metamucil _____

Pill Powder Cookie

Sugar-free/ Regular

One Level Teaspoon/ Tablespoon with 8-12 oz. of water

Once a day Twice a Day

It is important to keep the bowel movement easy, don't push, strain or struggle.

Do not read, or sit a long time 'trying to go'.

How does Fiber work?

Soluble fiber, like Metamucil, Benefiber, Citrucel, Perdiem, work by absorbing water into the fiber, forming a soft gel. This gel mixes into what will become the bowel movement two or three days after ingestion. It is not a laxative. It does not work immediately. The dose you take today is your investment in a good bowel movement tomorrow.

Avoid products with Senna. The health food stores sell this as a natural aid, but it is habit forming, and will make the bowel movements worse as you age.

Is there testing that I should have?

Depending on your age and risk factors for a serious problem, your physician may ask you to obtain:

- Blood testing
- Sigmoidoscopy
- Lower GI X-ray, or Virtual Colonoscopy
- Colonoscopy