

Constipation



“I had a difficult time going to the bathroom. Eating prunes and other high-fiber foods, such as fruits and vegetables, helped me. I also drank lots of water.”

What is constipation?

Are you having bowel movements that come less often than normal for you, are painful, or are hard to pass? This is called constipation.

Let your doctor or nurse know if you have not had a bowel movement in 2 days.

Take these steps:

Eat high-fiber foods such as:

- Whole-grain breads and cereals
- Fruits and vegetables
- Nuts and seeds

Turn this sheet over to learn what other foods may help.

Drink lots of liquids.


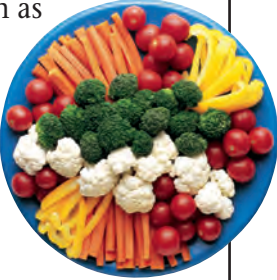

- Most people need to drink at least 8 cups of liquid every day. Water is a good choice. So are fruit and vegetable juices, such as prune juice.
- Warm liquids such as coffee or tea may help.

Try to be active every day.

- Walk or ride an exercise bike for 15 to 30 minutes a day.
- Talk with your doctor to learn about other exercises that can help you.



These foods may help if you are constipated:

Breads and grains	Fruits and vegetables	Snacks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bran muffins • Bran or whole-grain cereals • Brown or wild rice • Cooked, dried peas and beans (such as pinto, black, red, or kidney) • Whole-wheat bread • Whole-wheat pasta and tortillas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried fruit, such as apricots, dates, prunes, and raisins • Fresh fruit, such as apples, blueberries, and grapes • Raw or cooked vegetables, such as broccoli, corn, green beans, peas, and spinach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granola • Nuts • Popcorn • Seeds, such as sunflower 
<p>Ask your doctor or nurse which foods are best for you.</p>		

Questions to ask your doctor or nurse:

1. What problems should I call you about?
2. Should I keep track of when I have a bowel movement, what I eat, and how often I exercise?
3. How much liquid should I drink each day?
4. What medicines are okay for me to take?
5. What exercises can help me?
6. Could you give me the name of a nutritionist, so I can learn more about foods that might help me?



How can we help?

National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service

Phone: 1-800-422-6237 (1-800-4-CANCER)

Web: www.cancer.gov

Online Chat: www.cancer.gov/livehelp

NCI has a series of 18 Chemotherapy Side Effects Sheets at:

www.cancer.gov/chemo-side-effects

