Managing Chemotherapy Side Effects

Constipation

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.

“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.”

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.

Let your doctor or nurse know if you have not had a bowel movement in 2 days.
# Managing Chemotherapy Side Effects: Constipation

## These foods may help if you are constipated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Breads and grains</th>
<th>Fruits and vegetables</th>
<th>Snacks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Bran muffins</td>
<td>• Dried fruit, such as apricots, dates, prunes, and raisins</td>
<td>• Granola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bran or whole-grain cereals</td>
<td>• Fresh fruit, such as apples, blueberries, and grapes</td>
<td>• Nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Brown or wild rice</td>
<td>• Raw or cooked vegetables, such as broccoli, corn, green beans, peas, and spinach</td>
<td>• Popcorn</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cooked, dried peas and beans (such as pinto, black, red, or kidney)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Seeds, such as sunflower</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Whole-wheat bread</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Whole-wheat pasta and tortillas</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Ask your doctor or nurse which foods are best for you.

## 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?