

Suggestions for Managing Constipation

Constipation means your stool (poop) is hard or small, dry, difficult to pass, or infrequent (less than three times per week).

Speak with your doctor or nurse before trying these recommendations if you are experiencing abdominal pain and cramping, abdominal swelling or bloating, inability to pass flatus/gas, vomiting, constipation, no bowel movements (poop) for more than three days, or diarrhea.

Laxative Recommendations:

- Start at Step 1. If a step is ineffective after one day, proceed to the next step.

Step 1:

- Take 17 grams polyethylene glycol 3350 once daily.
- This medication is sold under brand names such as Lax-A-Day® and Restoralax®.
- If this is not effective after one day, proceed to step 2.

Step 2:

- Continue taking 17 grams polyethylene glycol 3350 once daily plus 2 Senokot-S® tablets (or 10mL Sennosides liquid) at bedtime.
- If this is not effective after one day, proceed with step 3.

Step 3:

- Continue with 17 grams polyethylene glycol 3350 once daily plus 2 Senokot-S® at breakfast and 2 Senokot-S® at bedtime.

If you are still constipated or have severe cramping after following these steps, speak with your doctor or nurse. If you have diarrhea, stop taking laxatives until you have a normal bowel movement and restart at Step 1.

Additional information:

- Each person has a different bowel pattern and unique circumstances. Your health care team may make different recommendations tailored to your needs.
- It is normal to have fewer or smaller bowel movements if you are eating less than usual. You should still have regular bowel movements even if you are not eating.
- Drink enough fluid each day as this helps to keep the stools soft.
- As a general rule, if you do not have bowel movement for three or more days, talk with your doctor or nurse.
- Try foods that are natural laxatives such as prunes, prune juice, papayas and rhubarb.
- Do light exercise, such as a short walk, if you are able to.
- If constipation is caused by medication it is not helpful to increase the fibre in your diet or use fibre supplements such as Metamucil.