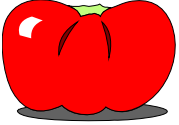


# Constipation

## What Is It?

- **Constipation**- Painful bowel movements, uncomfortable and passing a hard stool, difficult to pass
- **Some People**- have a bowel movement 2 times per day while others have 3 per week and this can be normal
- **Stools**- pass too slowly through the small intestines

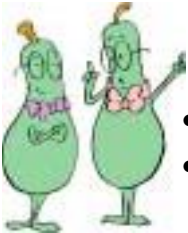


## What are the symptoms?

- **Infrequent Stools**- that are hard or difficult to pass, also dry, feeling of the stool being in the rectum after a bowel movement

## Information:

- **Causes**- inadequate fluids, fiber, exercise, not going to the bathroom when you feel the urge, some medications, laxative overuse, depression, hyperthyroidism, and colon cancer
- **Drink**- a minimum of 8 glasses of fluid per day
- **Eat**- 8 to 10 fiber foods per day, to begin slowly and build up
  - (See handout for foods high in fiber)
- **Laxatives**- should not be used long term can make the problem worse, your intestines need to function on their own, as well as absorption of foods and medications.
- **High Fat Meal**- slow you down, promote hard stools
- **Caffeine**- can stimulate the muscles in the intestines, hot is best, or hot then cold stimulates the colon



## What Can I Do?

- **See your Health Care Provider**-especially if bloody or black stools, constipation that lasts more than 3 days, abdominal pain after passing the stool
- **Talk with a Registered Dietitian**- about fiber and fluids you may be restricted due to other diagnosis
- **Foods High in Fiber**- Whole Grain Breads, Pastas, Cereals, Fresh Fruits, Fresh Vegetables, Baked Beans, Blackeyed Peas, Vidalia Onions

