



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, Black-eyed Peas, Vidalia Onions.

