

CONSTIPATION WORKSHEET

Dietary changes

- Drink at least eight cups of fluid per day.
- Add fiber. Good examples are prunes, pears, nuts, grains, ground flaxseed and bran.
- Drink caffeinated warm beverages with meals. Avoid carbonated beverages if bloating is a problem.
- Eat a well-balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, multigrain breads and cereals. Eat smaller meals several times per day.
- Avoid high-sugar foods and snacks.
- Choose high-fiber bread (>5 grams fiber) over refined white or wheat bread.

Lifestyle changes

- Exercise – walk daily if possible. PT can help you get started.
- Try to maintain good posture with exercise.

Medicine recommendations *(Note: talk to your doctor before beginning)*

- Stool softeners once or twice a day can help, i.e. Dulcolax®. Stool softener with stimulant if you experience moderate to severe constipation.
- Glycolax powder (Miralax®) can be purchased over the counter and is very effective with little side effects and can be used daily if needed.
- Once daily supplements such as fish oil, flaxseed oil, magnesium.
- Avoid excessive use of fiber supplements such as Metamucil® or Citrucel® as they can sometimes worsen constipation and lead to obstruction.

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Other treatments

- Ask your doctor about medicines in the anticholinergic family that can worsen constipation, such as amantadine, amitriptyline and sedatives.
- A gastroenterologist is a specialist that treats constipation.
- Occupational therapy can help establish a bowel routine or regimen.
- Ask your doctor for a nutritional consult to help with diet.