

About Constipation



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What is constipation?

Constipation is when you have fewer bowel movements than usual. Just because you don't have a bowel movement every day does not mean you are constipated.

What causes constipation?

You may become constipated for many different reasons. It may be because you:

- Do not go to the bathroom right away when you feel the urge.
- Do not drink enough water.
- Use laxatives too much.
- Do not eat enough high fiber foods such as fruits and vegetables.
- Do not get enough exercise.
- Are taking a medicine that causes constipation (ask your healthcare provider).
- Have a disease that can cause constipation (ask your healthcare provider).

What are the symptoms of constipation?

- Small, dry or hard bowel movements.
- Bowel movements that hurt and are hard to pass.

The important thing is if there has been a change in what is usual for you.

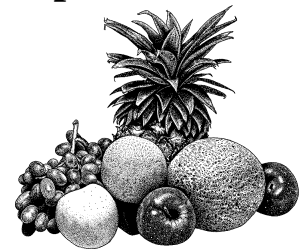
How can I keep from getting constipated, or help my constipation?

- Go to the bathroom when you feel the urge to go.

- Drink more water.



- Eat more high-fiber foods such as fruits, vegetables and cereals with 5 or more grams of fiber per bowl.



- Drink prune juice or eat stewed fruits in the morning.



- Get more exercise.



- Only use laxatives, enemas and fiber supplements (Metamucil, Citrucel) if your healthcare provider tells you.

