



Constipation

Many medications can cause constipation. Bowel function also is affected by activity and diet. For example, regular doses of narcotic pain medications often cause constipation. A plan that includes using a laxative and stool softener is almost always needed to avoid constipation. You should take a stool softener such as Colace® (or docusate — a generic equivalent) twice a day (breakfast and bedtime) unless you develop diarrhea (loose, watery stools).

Follow this daily bowel plan just as carefully as your provider's other instructions. The overall goal is to have a bowel movement every one to two days. If the dosage of your narcotic medication is changed, you may need to increase or decrease your daily dosage of laxative/softener. If you have any questions, please call the clinic (621-6100) to speak with a nurse.

If you do not have a bowel movement daily, despite taking a stool softener, please follow these steps:

1. Take two Senokot® tablets (or sennocides — a generic equivalent) at bedtime.
2. If you do not have a bowel movement in the morning, take two Senokot® (or generic) tablets after breakfast.
3. If you do not have a bowel movement by evening, take three Senokot® (or generic) tablets at bedtime.
4. If you do not have a bowel movement in the morning, take three Senokot® (or generic) tablets after breakfast.
5. If there is no movement within 48 hours after starting this program, add 17 grams (one capful) Miralax® (or polyethylene glycol 3335 — a generic equivalent) to eight ounces water or juice, in the morning.

If you do not have a bowel movement within 72 hours (three days) after starting this program, please call the clinic (621-6100) and speak with a nurse.

Once you have established a routine, keep taking the number of tablets that works for you. If you have a loose, watery stool, do not take your softener/laxative until your stools become firm again.