



## **Constipation – Relieve Your Burden**

Constipation may be present if you have three or fewer bowel movements in a week or if the stool is hard, dry, painful, or difficult to pass.

There are several things you can do to prevent constipation. Among them:

- Eat a well-balanced diet with plenty of fiber. Good sources of fiber are fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole-grain bread and cereal (especially bran). Fiber and water help the colon pass stool.
- Drink 1 1/2 to 2 quarts of water and other fluids a day (unless fluid restricted for another medical condition). Liquids that contain caffeine, such as coffee and soft drinks, seem to have a dehydrating effect and may need to be avoided until your bowel habits return to normal. Some people may need to avoid milk, as dairy products may be constipating for them.
- Exercise regularly.
- Move your bowels when you feel the urge.

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