

CONSTIPATION

HOW TO AVOID OR TREAT AND ENJOY A SMOOTH RECOVERY

1. BEGIN BEFORE SURGERY



- ✓ Drink plenty of water throughout the day and get physical activity daily.
- ✓ Eat foods with high fiber including fruits (apples, apricots, pears, oranges, mangoes), and vegetables (greens, carrots, peas, beans, sweet potatoes).
- ✓ Reduce refined flour, pasta, and dairy.

2. BEGIN AFTER SURGERY

- ✓ Stroll around the hospital floor then around the halls at home a few times daily.

3. START IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY AND CONTINUE WHILE TAKING PRESCRIPTION PAIN MEDICATION.

- ✓ Fiber supplements **and** stool softener.
 - Fiber: *Metamucil, Citrucel, Fibercon*
 - Stool Softener: *Docosate sodium (Colace and other brands)*

****Fiber supplements alone are not enough to prevent or treat narcotic-associated constipation.***

4. Add a laxative if you have the urge to have a Bowel Movement (BM) but can't, if you are passing firm or painful stool, or if you have not had a BM in 1-2 days.

****Laxatives can be used in combination, one from each category below.***

First: Saline/Osmotic Laxatives (bring water into the colon):

- Milk of Magnesia (one dose every 3 hours until bowel movement)
- Mira lax (17gms in 8oz water every 12 hours until BM, then once daily)
- Magnesium Citrate (Per package directions)

Second: Stimulant Laxatives (enhance movement of stool through the colon):

- Bisacodyl (Dulcolax)
- Senna (Senekot)

5. If all of the above are unsuccessful in eliciting a bowel movement, fluids in the rectum will create the urge to defecate, to "jump start" the bowels.
 - Use an enema. (*Fleets saline enema*)

Call the office at 770-292-2670 for further instructions if an enema fails to produce a bowel movement or if you have vomiting not relieved by anti-nausea medications along with constipation.