

GMHC'S Nutrition & Wellness Program

MANAGING CONSTIPATION

The following suggestions may be beneficial in helping you manage constipation.

SOME POSSIBLE CAUSES OF CONSTIPATION

- Side effect of some medications such as antacids, anti-depressants, and methadone
- A diet low in fiber
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Lack of exercise
- Stress

SUGGESTION 1: DRINK PLENTY OF FLUIDS

- Drink at least 8 glasses of water every day.
- Fluids can also come from soups, juices, and milk or *Lactaid* milk.
- Have a hot drink like herbal teas and hot lemon water.
- Prune juice may provide some relief.

SUGGESTION 2: CONSUME FOODS HIGH IN INSOLUBLE FIBER

- Fiber is the part of food that cannot be digested or absorbed by the body.
- Foods high in insoluble fiber helps food pass easily through the intestines and form large, soft stools to get rid of waste.
- Gradually increase your fiber intake over several weeks. Gas and bloating may occur if you introduce high fiber foods into your diet too fast.
- Eat your vegetables raw. If you cannot eat them raw, try to slightly steam or bake them to help maintain their fiber content.

SUGGESTION 3: EXERCISE

- Get some exercise every day to help hone the stomach muscles and move your stools.
- Exercise is a good way to reduce stress

SUGGESTION 4: OTHER ALTERNATIVES

- **EASY Recipe: APPLE/PRUNE SAUCE**
1/3 c unprocessed bran (all bran cereal)
1/3 c applesauce
1/3 c mashed stewed prunes

1. Mix all ingredients and store in refrigerator.
2. Take 1-2 tablespoon of this mixture before bedtime, then drink 8 oz. of water.
3. Make sure you drink enough water.

[Source: Eating Hints NIH NCI 2001]

- Consider the following natural remedies:
 - Dried papaya
 - Powdered psyllium seed husk
 - 4 oz prune juice (2x/day)
- If the above ideas do not to provide relief, consult with your physician about possibly using a laxative such as milk of magnesia.

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FOODS HIGH in INSOLUBLE FIBER are:

beans	dried fruits
bran cereals	nuts and seeds
brown rice	raw fruits and vegetables
bulgur wheat	whole grain products
corn, popcorn	