

Constipation Guidelines

PATIENT EDUCATION

As if the discomfort that goes along with your spine problem is not enough, a frequent side effect of narcotic pain medication is constipation. The narcotic not only depresses your perception of pain, but also depresses your colon function. In addition, decreased activity or immobilization before and after surgery may cause constipation. If you have any chronic gastrointestinal conditions, please consult your primary care provider or gastroenterologist.

It may be a good idea to start on the following regimen to prevent constipation. You can purchase these medications at your local grocery store or pharmacy over the counter:

- **Water** – patients should drink at least 8 glasses (64 oz.) of water per day
- **Miralax** – this is a fiber source that may be purchased. Follow directions as indicated on the product.
- **Senna S** – This medication restores the normal movement through the colon. Up to 4 may be taken per day if needed.
- **Milk of Magnesia** – a laxative for sever constipation. Follow directions as indicated on the product. Do not use for more than 3 days.
- **Fleets Enema or Glycerin Suppositories** – May be used if above products are not effective.

As your need for narcotics lessens, your activity level and walking increase, your bowel movements will become more regular and you can discontinue the above medications gradually.

If these suggestions do not help and you continue to have problems, please call the office for further advice.