



## Bowel Movements

Bowel movements may be irregular for several weeks. You may have intermittent constipation and diarrhea. If you have had surgery on your small intestine (bowel) or colon, it is not uncommon to pass small amounts of blood in your stool for 1-2 weeks. Large amounts of blood in the stool or passing blood without a bowel movement is reason to contact your surgeon immediately.

Narcotic pain medications will make you constipated. As the need for pain medicine decreases, so will the constipation. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids; dehydration will worsen constipation. You may try eating prunes or drinking prune juice as well.

- It is recommended that you take a stool softener such as Colace (Docusate) or Dulcolax (Bisacodyl) while you are taking narcotic pain medication to prevent constipation.
- If a stool softener alone does not work, you may try a gentle laxative such as Senna (sennosides) or Milk of Magnesia.
- If you have not had a bowel movement for more than 24 hours once you go home, you may try a stronger over-the-counter laxative such as Miralax or Magnesium citrate.
- Suppositories (Dulcolax) or enemas may be appropriate if you have not had surgery on your colon.
- Please contact your surgeon if your constipation persists.

All of these medications can be purchased over-the-counter at your local pharmacy.

- Docusate (Colace) 100-200 mg by mouth twice daily
- Bisacodyl (Dulcolax) 1-3 tabs by mouth once daily
- Senna 2-4 tabs by mouth 1-2 times daily
- Milk of Magnesia 30-60 ml by mouth once daily
- Miralax 17 gm (1 spoonful) by mouth 1-2 times daily
- Magnesium Citrate 150-300 ml by mouth once daily
- Bisacodyl (Dulcolax) suppository 1 per rectum once daily