



## POST-OPERATIVE CONSTIPATION PROTOCOL

Even if you have regular bowel movements prior to having surgery, you are likely to experience post-operative constipation. Exposure to anesthetics and narcotics, alterations in your diet and fluid intake, and reduced physical activity contribute to this constipation.

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL

- Drink plenty of water (8 glasses daily is recommended) but drink as much as your mobility permits given you will have to get up to urinate more often.
- Increase your dietary fiber such as fruits, vegetables, salads, oats, and bran.
- Prunes can be especially helpful producing bowel movements.

### IF YOU BEGIN TO EXPERIENCE CONSTIPATION

Constipation is defined as firm bowel movements or less frequent bowl movements than your baseline.

- We recommend starting over the counter Miralax daily.
  - Start with one scoop of powder mixed in with a 6 oz. glass of water or juice daily
    - With or without food, you man do this at any time of day
  - You may increase or decrease this (1/2 scoop daily, 2 scoops, etc.) depending on your subsequent bowel movements

### STILL CONSTIPATED DESPITE INCREASING MIRALAX

- We then recommend you obtain a 10 oz. bottle of Magnesium Citrate over the counter and drink the entire bottle
  - Expect several bowel movements within 30 minutes to several hours thereafter.
- Continue Miralax daily thereafter.

Sometimes, the problem is not the consistency of your stools as they are moving along the intestines but the presence of hard stools int your rectum acting as a plug. Gently place a rectal suppository such as a Ducolax suppository, to help remove that plug. If you try the above and this suppository twice without any results, then call our office at (805) 220-6020.

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