

Patient Post-Operative Bowel Prevention

Having surgery puts you at higher risk of developing constipation, which can lead to an obstruction or other bowel problems. Contributing factors include anesthesia, stress, dietary changes, decreased activity, and the use of narcotic pain medication.

It is important that you take a *pro-active* approach to preventing constipation from occurring.

Diet and Exercise

- Drink 6-8 glasses (8 oz) of liquid each day. Recommended liquids are water, juices and milk. Limit the amount of caffeine, including coffee, tea, or soda.
- High fiber foods can help promote a bowel movement. High fiber foods include fiber or bran cereals, oatmeal, beans, vegetables, and whole grain breads. Prune juice may help soften bowel movements.
- Exercise can promote GI motility. If appropriate, daily walking is encouraged.

Medication Points

- You will need to take preventative bowel medications (i.e. stool softeners/stimulants) after surgery. These preventative medications should **continue** after discharge while you take narcotic pain medication at home.
- Bowel medications can be individualized depending on your needs and response.
- All of the recommended medications are available over-the-counter at local pharmacies or drug/grocery stores.

Recommendations

	Medication	Alternative
Scheduled (Take twice a day)	Docusate-Senna 50mg/8.6mg combination (Senna-S®) (Peri-Colace®) (Sennokot-S®) 1-2 tabs twice daily	Docusate sodium 100mg (Colace®) stool softener 1-2 tab twice daily
		+ Senna 187mg (sennosides 8.6mg) mild stimulant laxative 1-2 tab twice daily
Take if Needed	MiraLax® 17 gm (one heaping tablespoon of powder) osmotic laxative Mix in 120-240ml of fluid as needed 1-2 times per day	Milk of Magnesia saline laxative/antacid 30ml once daily as needed
If no bowel movement within 3 days	Bisacodyl 10mg rectal suppository (Ducolax® suppository) stimulant laxative 1 suppository (10mg) per rectum once daily as needed	Seek medical care if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severe abdominal pain, swelling or vomiting • No bowel movement in 5-7 days • Fever for 24-48 hours with unknown cause