

## Constipation

Some anticancer drugs and other drugs, such as pain medications, may cause constipation. This problem also can occur if your diet lacks enough fluid or fiber, or if you've been in bed for a long time. Here are some suggestions for preventing and treating constipation:

- Drink plenty of liquids - at least eight 8-ounce glasses every day. This will help to keep your stools soft. Another way to think about fluids is to try to drink at least 1/2 oz. per pound of your body weight.
- Have a hot drink about one-half hour before your usual time for a bowel movement.
- Check with your doctor to see if you can increase the fiber in your diet (there are certain types of cancer for which a high-fiber diet is not recommended). If you can, try foods such as whole-grain breads and cereals, dried fruits, wheat bran, wheat germ; fresh fruits and vegetables; dried beans and peas. Eat the skin on potatoes. Make sure you also drink plenty of fluids to help the fiber work.
- Get some exercise every day. Talk to your doctors or a physical therapist about the amount and type of exercise that's right for you.

If these suggestions don't work, ask your doctor about medicine to ease constipation. Be sure to check with your doctor before taking any laxatives or stool softeners.