

Care Gram

Constipation

What Is Constipation?

Constipation occurs when a person's bowel movements decrease to fewer than three per week for the following reasons:

- Difficult to pass
- Incomplete
- Very hard or dry

How to Treat Constipation

- Drink 2 to 4 extra glasses of water daily (unless told by your doctor to limit fluids for another health condition)
- Try drinking 4 cups of warm water when you get up in the morning – then wait for 30 minutes before eating or drinking anything cold
- Add fruits and vegetables to your diet
- Try eating prunes or drinking prune juice
- Try eating whole grain foods, such as:
 - Oatmeal and bran
 - Whole grain breads
 - Whole grain pastas
- Be as active as possible with a daily exercise routine
- Report this condition to your family doctor if this condition persists or if there is a change in your bowel habits
- If needed, try a very mild over-the-counter medicine, such as:
 - Docusate (Pericolace) – stool softener
 - Milk of Magnesia – laxative
 - Metamucil – bulk-producing laxative and fiber supplement

This Care Gram is for information purposes only. It may become out-of-date over time. Ask a doctor or a healthcare professional about your specific condition.



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