

# Patient Education

UW National Center of Excellence in Women's Health



## Constipation

*Diet tips for relief and prevention*

**Increase fiber intake slowly.**

**Rapid increase in dietary fiber can cause gas and discomfort. When increasing fiber, be sure to also increase liquids.**

**You should have 20-35 grams of fiber daily. Below are some examples of foods containing fiber.**

Food	Grams
Pinto beans, 3/4 cup	10.4
Wheat bran cereal, 1 oz.	10
Banana	3.8
Prunes, 3	3.5
Apple, small	2.8

### To Prevent Constipation:

Certain foods and drinks, and the proper amount of exercise can help alleviate the symptoms of constipation.

#### *Foods and drinks:*

- Eat high-fiber foods such as raisins, raw vegetables, salads, bran cereals, whole-grain bread and fresh fruit.
- Eat prunes or figs.
- Eat oatmeal, applesauce, legumes (dried beans) and barley, to soften the stool.
- Flax meal can be purchased already ground. Or, you can buy the seeds and grind them yourself. Flax meal is a good source of natural fiber and health-promoting Omega-3 fatty acids. It can be stirred into or sprinkled on foods.
- Drink plenty of liquids – at least eight glasses a day. Water and herbal tea are best. Juices are not recommended, nor are caffeinated drinks, as your body can become dependent on these in the long run.
- Drink several cups of warm-to-hot liquid in the morning. Herbal teas or water work well.

#### *Exercise:*

- Do daily exercise, like a brisk half-hour walk.
- Visit the toilet for 15 minutes in the morning, even if you are unable to have a bowel movement. This relaxes and stimulates your digestive system.
- Sit quietly for 15 minutes after eating a meal to aid in digestion.



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON  
MEDICAL CENTER

UW National Center of Excellence in  
Women's Health

Box 354765

4245 Roosevelt Way N.E. Seattle, WA 98105

206-598-8991

## Questions?

Your questions are important. Make an appointment to see your health care provider to discuss questions or concerns.