

Tips for Dealing with Constipation

This guide has been prepared for your use by Registered Dietitians. If you have questions or concerns, please call the nearest Aurora facility to contact a dietitian. Diet counseling is recommended to address your specific needs. This is especially important if you have other diet restrictions or are unable to maintain your weight. Please ask your doctor for a referral to a dietitian.

Many things may cause constipation. This includes changes in your diet, inactivity, surgery, and certain drugs. The following tips may be helpful in preventing constipation:

- Drink plenty of fluids – at least eight cups every day. This may help to keep the stools soft. If you are losing weight, drink high calorie fluids such as milk.
- Include juices, especially prune, apple and papaya juice, and fruits such as prune, rhubarb and papaya, to help loosen stools.
- Drink a hot beverage about one half hour before your usual time for a bowel movement. Hot liquids and warm juices often stimulate bowel activity.
- Eat high fiber foods such as whole-grain bread, cereals, and pasta; fresh fruits and dried fruits such as prunes, raisins, and dates; fresh vegetables; dried beans and peas; and whole grain products such as barley or brown rice.
- If raw fruits and vegetables are difficult to chew, try grating them into a salad or gelatin, or chop them in a blender.
- Eat the skin on fruits, vegetables, and potatoes, unless you have chewing and swallowing problems.
- Try high fiber snack foods such as oatmeal cookies, fig newtons, and date or raisin bars. Granola, popcorn, or nuts may be used if you have no chewing or swallowing problems.
- Add one or two tablespoons of unprocessed wheat bran to foods such as cereal, casseroles, and homemade bread.
- Do as much light exercise, like walking, as you can.
- Talk to your doctor if you continue to have problems. A daily stool softener or laxative may be necessary.

**For a list of Aurora facilities with a dietitian, please call
Aurora Health Care toll free at 1-888-863-5502.**