



Constipation Nutrition Tips

Constipation may be caused by some chemotherapy medications or lack of or limited exercise. Adding more fiber to your diet may help.

- *Gradually* increase your intake of fiber as you may initially have increased flatulence (gas) until your body gets used to more fiber in the diet. Try kidney beans, chickpeas, lentils—soaking beans first in water and discarding the water may help to reduce flatulence from this group of foods. Fresh fruit and vegetables, and/or dried fruit (like prunes, apricots, raisins, and dates) are also excellent fiber sources.
- Plan your diet and when you will get your fiber intake in.
- Start your day eating bran cereals (like All Bran®) or shredded wheat, or foods made with whole grains as bulgur or wheat berries. Aim for a cereal with at least 5 grams of fiber per serving
- Add unprocessed wheat bran or ground flaxseed to hot cereals, yogurt or cottage cheese.
- A hot drink (non-caffeinated) such as lemon water or even prune juice may help in the morning upon awakening. Sometimes a simple cup of hot water can help to get bowels moving. Prune juice is effective for many people as well. *Room temperature or lukewarm prune juice is usually more effective than cold juice.*
- Remember to drink plenty of liquids. You need more fluid as you increase your fiber intake for fiber to work effectively.
- Reduce your caffeine intake as caffeine may promote constipation by causing you to lose fluids. However, if coffee helps you to achieve regular bowel movements, be sure to include one cup per day.
- Exercise may help, check with your doctor first.
- Often diet alone is not enough to get your bowels moving, speak with your medical team or dietitian regarding medication options and use of laxative teas. Often the first step involves the addition of a stool softener and mild laxative. Do not use suppositories or enemas without speaking to your doctor.

Adapted from: The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (www.eatright.org); & [Supportive Cancer Care](#), Rosenbaum MD & Rosenbaum MA, 2001;...And Other Patients (and what has worked for them.)

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