

# Diet for Constipation

Constipation is when bowel movements become less frequent or stools become hard, dry, and difficult to pass. Constipation can be caused by medications, inactivity, low fiber in the diet and not drinking enough fluids. Here are some things you can do with your diet to help prevent or treat constipation:

## 1. Increase fiber.

**Whole grains:** bran cereals (All-bran, Bran Flakes, Fiber One, Raisin Bran), bran meal, bran muffins, brown rice, bulgur, buckwheat, granola, oatmeal, oat cereals (Cheerios, Quaker Oat Squares), popcorn, wheat germ, whole wheat bread, whole wheat cereal (Shredded Wheat, Wheat Chex, Wheaties, Total), whole wheat pasta.

**Fruits:** apples, applesauce, blackberries, blueberries, dried fruit (apricots, figs, prunes), raspberries, strawberries, watermelon.



**Vegetables:** broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, corn, greens, kale, peas, potatoes with skin, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes.

**Beans:** all dried beans including black, chickpeas, kidney, lentil, navy, red, pinto, white.

## 2. Drink more fluids.

Aim for 8 glasses (8 oz each) per day of water, milk, or juice. Coffee and tea can be used moderately. The high caffeine content in strong coffee may help move bowels, especially in people who do not normally drink coffee. Prune juice and apple juice contain natural substances that can help relieve constipation.



## Diet for Constipation (*continued*)

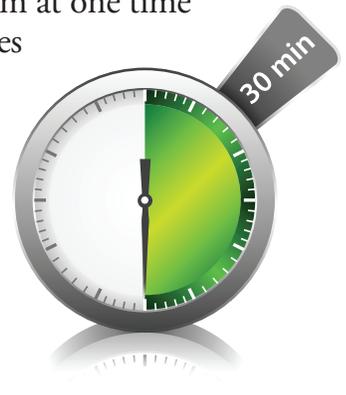
### 3. Physical activity.

Moving your body can help move your bowels. Try to increase daily activity by:

- Walking to your mailbox
- Taking the stairs
- Parking farther from the store
- Doing light household chores

Consider trying a new activity, such as dancing, aerobics, swimming, or yoga. The key is to increase your daily activities and make it fun.

Your exercise goal is 30 minutes a day. If 30 minutes is too much to perform at one time break it down into 10 minute increments and repeat the exercises a few times throughout the day. Start slowly and gradually increase your time.



#### More Information

For more information about constipation and your diet contact:

**Beth, Dietitian**  
**319-369-8027**

Call your healthcare provider if you have uncontrolled constipation:

**Physicians' Clinic of Iowa**  
**Hematology & Oncology**  
**319-297-2900**