

CONSTIPATION

Constipation is described as the difficult and/or infrequent passage of hard stool. A difficult bowel movement can be very painful and embarrassing as well.

Problems with constipation are associated with inactivity, pregnancy, stomach disorders, insufficient intake of bulky food or water, taking pain medicine, stress, or overuse of laxatives.

Signs of Constipation

1. No appetite - not hungry
2. Bloating feeling
3. Weakness
4. Passing gas
5. Headache
6. Dizziness
7. Abdominal enlargement
8. Abdominal pain and cramping - pain is sometimes severe
9. Occasional diarrhea

Preventative Measures

1. Drink plenty of fluids like water and juices (at least 6 to 8 glasses a day).
2. Get plenty of exercise. Walking is an excellent exercise for constipation.
3. Eat a well balanced diet. Set regular times to eat meals. Include bulk or roughage in your diet; foods like bran cereals and breads, cabbage, lettuce, celery, apples, oranges, prunes, or any fresh fruits or vegetables.
4. Reduce consumption of highly processed foods or foods high in fat (most sweets).
5. Metamucil as directed.

Bowel habits vary from individual to individual depending on their diet, job, activity, medications, and stress. For many people, it is normal not to have a bowel movement every day.

Report to Doctor

1. If unable to get relief at home.
2. If you have signs of infection or bleeding from rectum.
3. Any changes in bowel pattern; i.e., diarrhea, then constipation, and then back to diarrhea.

Contact your physician if you have any questions or problems.