

CONSTIPATION

DEFINITION

- Less than three bowel movements in one week
- Lumpy or hard stool
- Straining when going to the bathroom
- A sense of fullness despite a daily bowel movement

STRATEGIES

- Women need 21-25 grams of fiber daily. Men need 30-38 grams. Become familiar with reading food labels and choose high-fiber foods, including:
 - Grains
 - Whole grain breads and pasta
 - High-fiber cereals that include whole grains or bran
 - Brown rice
 - Oatmeal
 - Fruits
 - Apples
 - Pears
 - Bananas
 - Figs
 - Raspberries
 - Prunes
 - Vegetables

- Greens like lettuce, spinach, collards, kale, and Swiss chard
- Beans like white, navy, pinto, black, garbanzo, and edamame
- Others like peas and lentils
- Increase fluid intake
 - This is especially important when increasing fiber intake or constipation can worsen.
 - Read the website document Hydration for more information.
- Exercise
 - Physical activity is an important component of gut health.
 - Read the website document Exercise for more information.
- Discuss your medications with the provider or nurse at MMC.
 - Some medications may cause constipation and alternatives may be available.
 - Over-the-counter laxatives are a treatment alternative to discuss.