

# Constipation Management

Virginia Ip

Normal bowel motion ranges from 3 times per day to once very three days.

It is preferable to avoid constipation in the first place by following the Golden Rules for Good Bowel Function recommended by the NSW Biofeedback & Continence Centre at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital :

## The Four 'F's'

- **Fluid** : Drink at least 6 – 8 fluid drinks per day. These include tap water, bottled water, milk, juice, cordial, soups, mineral water, tonic water, soda water, herbal tea, decaffeinated tea, decaffeinated coffee.
- **Fibre** : Eat the daily recommended intake of 30 grams. You find fibre in Cereals, Grains (Breads), Legumes, Fruit, Vegetables and Salad Vegetables.
- **Fitness** : Exercise is good for maintaining good bowel function. Walking is the best. Try to keep your body moving.
- **Feet** : Try to use the correct sitting position with you feet up on a stool. This position gives you the best angle to relax your muscles and do the best completed job.

## Helpful Tips

Breakfast :

- Start the day with a cup of hot water, add a slice of lemon if preferred, sip slowly as it is hot
- If no allergy , LSA ( Lindseed, Sunflower and Almond ) 2 tablespoonfuls on cereal or in yoghurt. LSA is available at the supermarket health food section
- Weetbix or oats for breakfast
- Wholemeal toast
- Fruit or vegetable juice

Lunch :

- Add a tablespoonful of olive oil to your salad or pasta
- Salad sandwich ( wholemeal bread)
- Yoghurt with LSA
- Fruit

Dinner :

- Add a tablessoonful of olive oil to vegetable
- Pumpkin

- Onions / chilli / garlic foods stimulate bowel movement

Before bed : an apple , pear or any stone fruit or 1 small glass of Aloe Vera Juice from the health food store

Throughout the day :

- Drink at least 4 -6 big glasses of water everyday
- If no allergy, eat small handful of nuts or seeds
- Yoghurt and dried fruit in between meals
- Try to have 3 pieces of fruit everyday
- Think wholemeal for all flour type products : bread, pasta, rice, cakes, biscuits
- Substitute margarine with cashew or almond paste, hommus or tahini (sesame ) paste
- If stressful personality, try Chamomile or Valerian tea

### **Toilet Time**

Try to go to toilet 15 – 20 mins after breakfast ( or after you have eaten ) . Have a regular toilet time, the same time everyday, take something to read if that helps you to relax, correct toileting position as mentioned above. Many people suffer from constipation simply because they do not have the time to go as they rush through the day. It is important to set aside ' toilet time ' and have a regular Bowel habit.

( **Reference** : Werda, J. 2004, Information for A Healthy Bowel , St . George Hospital Urology / Continence Service )