



Post-Surgical Bowel Regimen to Prevent Constipation

Many factors, including narcotic pain medications, reduced activity level and change in your diet, put you at risk for constipation. After surgery, the goal is to have a soft, formed bowel movement at least every other day. Drink plenty of fluids and follow these guidelines to help prevent constipation:

Post Op:

- **On the day of your procedure**, start 100 mg of docusate sodium (Colace) by mouth twice a day.
- **The day after your procedure**, start taking polyethylene glycol (MiraLAX). There is no maximum amount of MiraLAX you can take in a day. We recommend starting at 1 dose (1 capful) two or three times per day and increasing or decreasing based on your needs.
- If you are taking MiraLAX three times per day and you have no bowel movement for three (3) days, take Milk of Magnesia and/or Senokot once a day until you have a bowel movement. These two medications are only to be taken as needed. **IMPORTANT: Do not take Milk of Magnesia if you have poor kidney function.**

ADDITIONAL NOTES: Docusate sodium and MiraLAX are safe to take every day and are not habit-forming. Any laxative or stimulant should only be taken as needed, and not on an ongoing basis.

If you have chronic constipation:

- 100 mg of docusate sodium (Colace) by mouth twice a day.
- One (1) tablespoon of Citrucel in at least eight (8) ounces of water twice a day.
- Both of these medications are to be taken every day.
- MiraLAX once a day, up to three times per day as needed.
- If you have no bowel movement for three (3) days, take Milk of Magnesia and/or Senokot once a day until you have a bowel movement. These two medications are only to be taken as needed. **IMPORTANT: Do not take Milk of Magnesia if you have poor kidney function.**
- Remember that prunes/prune juice are natural laxatives.

All the above medications are available over the counter. These medications may not work immediately; it may take hours to produce the intended effect. If you take too much, you may get diarrhea. Make sure you are drinking plenty of fluids.

***If you are having severe abdominal pain, nausea or fever, DISCONTINUE taking laxatives. Contact Surgical Associates.**