

Clinician: _____

GENERAL

Constipation exists when there is difficult or very infrequent passage of feces. It is a common problem.

If bowel movements occur once every three days or more often and there is no difficulty in evacuation of feces, there is no problem with constipation.

It is common for stools to change in consistency, bulk, regularity and color (between shades of brown and yellow). If there is no difficulty with passage of the stools (such as pain, burning, excessive straining or temporary red rectal bleeding), there is no problem with constipation.

HOME TREATMENT-- Be sure to allow plenty of time to have a bowel movement.

1. Increase physical activity if possible. People in good physical condition have fewer problems with constipation.
2. Drink 8-10 glasses of water a day.
3. Increase fruits and vegetables in the diet. Add insoluble fiber and fiber-rich cereals. Specific fruit and fiber plans include:
 - a. Prunes (e.g., "Sunsweet" in the jar)-- Eat 2-5 prunes for part of a meal or for a snack once or twice a day.
 - b. Miller's Unprocessed Bran (sold in Supermarkets, etc.)-- 2-5 tablespoonfuls in cereal or fruit once or twice a day.
4. If the above suggestions fail, try Metamucil (or the cheaper generic equivalent "Natural Vegetable Powder" sold at drug stores, etc.), 1-3 tablespoonfuls with 1-2 full glasses of water once or twice a day.

The above suggestions can be tried singly, in combinations or all together.

If you've tried them all together without effect or if you have additional symptoms of concern (persistent rectal bleeding, persistent decrease in caliber of stools, fatigability, black stools, etc.), see a clinician at Student Health Services (909-869-4000).

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: _____

