

Why do I get constipation?

Constipation is very common after surgery. It can occur after surgery because of several reasons:

- not drinking enough fluids
- not eating enough fiber
- not walking moving around as much
- taking opioid (narcotic) pain medications

What can I do to treat constipation?

- Prevent or avoid it!
- If you feel the urge to go, go, do not wait.
 - Try going to the bathroom at the same time every day.
- Drink plenty of caffeine-free beverages (6-8 glasses) every day including: water, juice and milk.
- Walk around your home.
- Increase the amount of fiber in your diet. With extra fiber you will need to remember to drink liquids, they work together!
- You may use a stool softener such as Colace (docusate sodium) 100 mg, 1 capsule twice a day. This is important especially while taking prescription pain medications.
 - Stop the use of a stool softener if you develop loose bowel movements.

If the action steps listed above are not working you may use a mild laxative such as:

- Senna
- Milk of magnesia

- Polyethylene glycol (Miralax)

When should I call my care team?

Call us if you have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- cramps or abdominal pain that is not getting better.
- diarrhea.
- you have not had a bowel movement for 3 days.
- Also call if you have any questions or concerns.

What is the number to call?

- During business hours, Monday - Friday 8 am - 5 pm call Gynecology Oncology at 734-647-8906.
- After hours, on weekends or holidays call Michigan Medicine 734-936-4000 and ask to speak with the gynecologic oncology fellow on call.

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by Michigan Medicine for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by Michigan Medicine and for which Michigan Medicine does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Alli, Straubhar MD
Reviewers: Shitanshu, Uppal M.B;B.S

Patient Education by [Michigan Medicine](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International Public License](#). Last Revised 5/20/2021.