

Toileting Technique to Empty Your Bowels



1. Sit all the way back on the toilet.
 - Choose one of these positions: lean forward bending from the hips, resting your forearms on your thighs (pictured on the left) or place your feet on a stool (pictured on the right).
2. Relax your **anus** (anal opening).
3. Breathe in. When you breathe in, expand your belly by gently pushing out toward your belly button. Keep your belly firm and expanded as you gently push down and back toward the anus.
 - If you have recently given birth, or if you have **perineal descent** (a condition where the area between the vulva and anus bulges down lower than normal), you may need extra support while pushing. Place your fingers on the **perineum** (area between the vagina and rectum) to **splint**, or help hold, the area.

- If you have a **rectocele** (a weakened wall of tissue between the rectum and vagina), try putting 1 or 2 fingers into your vagina and pressing back on the vaginal wall toward the anus to provide extra support.
4. Repeat 3-4 times.
 - If you haven't been able to have a bowel movement or empty your bowels, squeeze your pelvic floor muscles to reset them back to normal and get off the toilet. Avoid straining.
 5. Use body movements to help reduce how much you need to wipe. Do this before wiping:
 - Place your hands on the inner side of your knees. Squeeze your knees together as you do a strong pelvic floor squeeze (**Kegel**) and hold this pressure for 5-10 seconds.
 - Then put your hands on outer side of your knees and push your knees apart. Do a strong Kegel at the same time, holding this pressure against your hands for 5-10 seconds.
 - These strong Kegels and leg motions will help you pinch off any remaining **stool** (poop) and keep you from wiping too much.

Disclaimer: This document contains instructions for occupational and/or physical therapy exercises developed by University of Michigan Health. Your health care provider has determined that these exercises are beneficial to you based on your condition at this time. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan, including whether it is appropriate to continue doing these exercises should your condition change.

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