

Prevention and Treatment of Constipation

You may experience constipation after surgery as a result of anesthesia, narcotic pain medication, reduced physical activity, and alterations in your diet. To prevent constipation after surgery, it is strongly recommended that you take an over-the-counter stool softener and laxative for two weeks after surgery or while taking narcotic pain medications.

Below are the over-the-counter medications recommended to prevent constipation:

- Colace, 1 capsule, twice a day
- MiraLAX (polyethylene glycol), 1 capful (17-grams), daily

If you have not had a bowel movement by the third day after surgery, it is recommended that you try the following over the counter medications until you have a bowel movement:

- Dulcolax suppository, 1 suppository, daily as needed
- Fleet Enema, 1 enema, daily as needed
- Milk of magnesia, 30-mL, daily as needed
- Magnesium citrate, ½-bottle, daily as needed

Recommended dietary changes to prevent constipation include:

- Eating prunes or drinking prune juice
- Drinking at least eight 8-oz glasses of water a day
- Eating plenty of fruits and vegetables

If you have any questions or concerns regarding treatment for constipation, please call your physician's office at 815-316-2100 for further recommendations.