

constipation

Cancer

Constipation occurs when bowels do not move regularly, and stools become challenging to pass. It can cause bloating, nausea, or painful bowel movements. Constipation can occur because of medication side effects, low activity levels, a low-fiber diet, or inadequate consumption of liquids.

Managing with Nutrition:

- Stay hydrated to keep your digestive system running smoothly. It's recommended to consume a minimum of 8 cups of liquid (64 ounces) each day. Always speak with your health care provider or cancer care team about specific hydration recommendations.
- Try warm or hot beverages. Many people find that drinking a warm or hot beverage, such as tea, coffee, or soup, can help relieve constipation.
- Add more fiber to your diet. Fiber is important in helping the digestive system work properly, and insoluble fiber is a specific type of fiber that helps relieve constipation. If your current diet is low in fiber, it's best to introduce fiber foods in small amounts over time while increasing water intake. See the list of *Foods to Help with Constipation* to learn more. Talk with your medical care provider or dietitian for specific recommendations, as certain types of cancer and cancer treatments may require a lower fiber diet.

Additional Tips:

- Try to incorporate daily physical activity. Movement can help relieve constipation. Always speak with your medical care provider before adding more activity or starting a new exercise plan.
- Keep a log of your bowel movements. Use the *Side Effects Tracker* to help. Bring it to medical appointments and share with your nurse or doctor to help create a more personalized bowel regimen, if necessary.
- Tell your doctor or nurse if you haven't had a bowel movement in more than 2 days.
- Never use fiber supplements, laxatives, stool softeners, or enemas without first talking to your doctor.