



## CONSTIPATION

- **Constipation is a condition where your stools are very hard or hard to pass.** Other symptoms include needing to strain or feeling like your bowels do not empty completely. As a result, you may also have cramping, pain, bloating, nausea, or a decreased appetite.
- **Can I be constipated if I'm passing stool regularly?**
  - Yes! Just because you are passing some stool regularly does not mean there isn't still stool backed up in your intestines.
  - This is especially likely to be true if your stools are small/low volume or hard in consistency.
- **Causes of constipation:**
  - High fat or high sugar diet
  - Diet that is low in fiber
  - Not drinking enough non-caffeinated liquids
  - Being inactive or spending most of the day sitting
  - Not going to the toilet when you have the urge to pass stool
  - Certain medicines
  - Overuse of laxatives
- **What helps prevent constipation?**
  - Drink at least 8-10 cups of non-caffeinated liquid per day
  - Eat high fiber foods such as whole grain breads, raw vegetables, fruit, and bran.
  - Limit your intake of cheeses, chocolate, and eggs. These foods tend to slow your intestines down.
  - Exercise regularly. Even a daily walk will help.
  - Go to the toilet as soon as you have the urge to pass stool. Don't try to hold it in.
- **What medications treat constipation?**
  - While there are many over the counter laxatives, enemas, and stool softeners, you should talk to your doctor before using most of these. They may affect your other medical conditions or interfere with medications that you take.
  - Your doctor can prescribe a laxative or stool softener that's safe for you if it is needed.