

# CONSTIPATION

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The normal length of time between bowel movements varies widely from person to person. Constipation is generally defined as having fewer than three bowel movements in a week. It is normal to have some changes in bowel movements from before to after surgery, as your intake has most likely changed significantly.

Symptoms of constipation include straining, hard stools, a feeling of incomplete emptying, and/or lower abdominal discomfort.

If you have not had a bowel movement in 3 or more days, try the following lifestyle changes:

- Drink water. Aim for at least 64 of fluid a day.
  - If you are drinking caffeinated beverages, these may worsen constipation.
- Plum smart light is a low sugar prune juice that may help with constipation.
- Try drinking warm liquids, especially in the morning.
- Increase the fiber in your diet by eating fresh fruits & vegetables, beans and whole grains.
  - Aim for 30 grams of fiber a day. It is important to work up gradually to this goal. See backside for ideas on adding fiber into your diet.
- Try sugar-free Citracel® or sugar-free Metamucil® if you are having difficulty obtaining enough fiber through your diet.
- Exercise. Regular exercise can help the digestive system function optimally.

*The above applies to people not on the very low calorie diet.*

## **CONSTIPATION PROTOCOL DURING VLCD AND POST SURGICALLY**

- Make sure you are drinking at least 64 oz. fluid/day.
- Try Sugar Free Citracel® when starting on the VLCD to help prevent constipation. If stools are too loose, stop fiber- Should not be used until Stage 2 diet has been started.
- If constipation persists, we recommend taking Colace per instructions on bottle.
- If no relief in 48 hours, try Miralax® mixed(1 scoop) with 4 ounces (1/2 cup) of Sunsweet® Plum Smart Light® (found near juices at grocery store) and 4 ounces of water.

## FIBER FILLED FOODS



### Fruits:

Food	Portion	Amount of Fiber
Pear	1 medium	6 gm
Prunes	Dried ½ cup	6 gm
Avocado	¼ of a medium	4.5 gm
Apple	1 medium	4 gm
Orange	1 medium	4 gm
Raspberries	½ cup	4 gm
Black berries	½ cup	4 gm

### Vegetables:

Food	Portion	Amount of Fiber
Navy Beans	½ cup	9.5 gm
White Beans	½ cup	9.5 gm
Lentils	½ cup	8 gm
Kidney Beans	½ cup	8 gm
Split Peas	½ cup	8 gm
Pinto Beans	½ cup	7.5 gm
Black Beans	½ cup	7.5 gm
Peas, green, frozen	½ cup	7 gm
Acorn squash	½ cup	4.5 gm
Edamame, frozen	½ cup	3 gm
Corn	¼ cup	3 gm
Brussel Sprouts, cooked	½ cup	3 gm

### Nuts and Seeds:

Food	Portion	Amount of Fiber
Chia seeds	1 tbsp	4 gm
Almonds	23 almonds	3.5 gm
Peanuts	¼ cup	3 gm
Pistachios	1 ounce	3 gm
Sunflower seeds	¼ cup	3 gm
Flax seeds	1 tbsp	3 gm
Pumpkin seeds	¼ cup	3 gm

### Grains:

Food	Portion	Amount of Fiber
Bob's Redmill Organic High Fiber hot cereal	1/3 cup dry cereal	10 gm
Flat Out –Hungry girl Flat Bread	1 flat bread	7 gm
Fiber One protein bars	1 bar	5 gm
Steel cut oats or Rolled oats	½ cup cooked	4 gm