

Constipation

Constipation is common in people with kidney disease. Some reasons for constipation include:

- Lack of exercise
- Ignoring the urge to go to the washroom
- Stress and anxiety
- Low fibre intake
- Low fluid intake
- Some medications and medical conditions

Having a bowel movement every 1 to 2 days is a good goal.

Tips for Keeping Your Bowels Regular

- Get active! Activities like walking, stretching, gardening or riding a stationary bike will help your bowels move.
- Go to the washroom as soon as you feel the urge.
- Take time for a bowel movement at a regular time every 1-2 days.
- Increase the amount of fibre in your diet. Do it gradually to avoid gas or bloating. Very large amounts of fibre are not suitable for people on a fluid restriction. See the “Adding More Fibre to Your Diet” section on the next page.
- Drink the amount of fluid recommended by your doctor or dietitian.

- Talk to your healthcare team about whether over-the-counter medications may help:

- Lactulose, 15 - 30 mL by mouth daily as needed
- Polyethylene Glycol 3350 (PEG) without electrolytes, 17 g (1 cap) by mouth daily as needed

Other _____

- If you have not had a bowel movement for 5 days or more, discuss with your nurse or doctor.

For PD patients, follow the directions from your nurse and doctor.

- If ordered by your doctor, take your bowel medications daily.

Adding More Fibre to Your Diet

People with kidney disease may need to be careful when adding fibre to their diets. Some higher fibre foods such as bran, beans, lentils, nuts and seeds are also high in phosphorus and potassium and may need to be limited. The following examples are low in potassium, but if you eat a lot, the amount can add up. Check with your dietitian if you need to limit the amount of potassium you eat.

Get started by including higher fibre foods in your diet such as:

Vegetables

- Asparagus
- Cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Chayote
- Corn, yellow
- Eggplant
- Green Beans
- Green Peas
- Jicama
- Okra
- Snow Peas
- Turnip

Fruits

- Apples
- Blueberries
- Cherries
- Cranberries
- Kumquat
- Peaches
- Pear
- Pineapple
- Plum
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Tangerine/Mandarin

Eat the whole vegetable and fruit, (instead of juice). Include the skin or peel when possible.

High Fibre Grains

- Barley
- Bulgur
- Cereals such as Shredded Wheat
- Popcorn
- Whole Wheat Breads
- Whole Wheat Pasta

Add 1-2 tablespoons ground flaxseed to yogurt, cereals, smoothies, or homemade muffins.

These examples are appropriate for most people with kidney disease. Ask your dietitian for more ideas, brand specific examples, and how many servings of vegetables and fruit is best for you.