

Avoiding Constipation After Surgery

A diet with enough fiber (20-35 grams each day) helps form soft, bulky stool. High-fiber foods include whole grains, bran cereals, fresh fruits, and vegetables. For people prone to constipation, limiting foods that have little or no fiber, such as ice cream, cheese, meat, and processed foods, is also important. Also, be sure to drink plenty of fluids, such as water, fruit and vegetable juices, and clear soups. Avoid soft drinks, and drinks with artificial sweeteners.

Options for Avoiding Constipation:

- **Bulk-forming laxatives:** also known as fiber supplements are taken with water. They absorb water into the intestine and make the stool softer. Brand names include *Metamucil, Citrucel, Konsyl, and Serutan*.
- **Stool Softeners:** provide moisture to the stool and prevent dehydration. Products include *Colace and Surfak*.
- **Stimulants:** cause rhythmic muscle contractions in the intestines. Brand names include *Correctol, Dulcolax, Purge, and Senokot*.
- **Saline Laxatives:** act like a sponge to draw water into the colon for easier passage of stool. Laxatives in this group include *Milk of Magnesia* and *Haley's M-O*.
- **Lubricants:** grease the stool enabling it to move through the intestine more easily. *Mineral oil* is the most common example.