

BOWEL MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Colorectal Surgery Services

Bowel Management:

The goal is to make stools of a normal consistency. Avoid foods or anything that causes diarrhea or hard stool. You should do the following checked actions:

- Have one stool every 1 – 2 days. Use a stool softener like Colace™ twice a day or as directed on the bottle. Mineral oil can be used instead of Colace™
- Use a laxative like milk of magnesia if needed if there is no stool for 3 days. Discuss this with your physician if no results.
- If you have severe diarrhea, use an anti-diarrhea medication like Immodium™ as directed by your doctor or as stated on the bottle.

Diet management & fluid:

Increasing fiber intake helps the stool stay consistent. Eat about 30 grams of fiber each day. It is best to eat lots of fruits and vegetables. An example would be two servings of fruits and / or vegetables with each meal.

If it is difficult to eat fruits or vegetables use a fiber supplement. Drink plenty of fluids like water or Gatorade™. Use either of the ones available over-the-counter checked below:

- Metamucil™ or Konsyl™ as directed on the bottle.
- One bowl of All-Bran™ each morning.
- Citrucel™ as directed on the bottle.
- Benefiber® as directed on the bottle

Fluid management:

Increase your fluid intake. Drink 8 glasses (8 ounces) of non-caffeine, non-alcohol drinks each day. This can easily be achieved by taking two glasses with each meal. Increase fluid intake on hot days. It may be helpful to take 500cc plastic bottles of water with you to work or school or to other activities. Ask your health care team for instructions if you are taking a diuretic or fluid pill, have heart failure or kidney disease.

Remember to follow the instructions given to you and see your physician or nurse as scheduled. These written instructions **do not** replace a discussion with your physician or nurse. They may give you other instructions. Feel free to ask questions, come back for a visit or call if you are unclear about your diagnosis or treatment plan.