

Bowel Care

Information for patients

Why are good bowel habits important?

It is important to avoid constipation and straining to open your bowels. This can put pressure onto the pelvic floor and contribute to problems of prolapse.

(The term 'prolapse' describes symptoms where the vaginal walls become lax and begin to bulge and / or the womb and cervix start to draw down within the vagina.)

How do I avoid constipation?

Ensure that you enjoy a balanced diet, adequate fluid intake and take regular exercise.

Include a wide range of fibre rich foods in your diet. Fresh fruit and vegetables, pulses, brown rice, wholemeal bread, dried fruit and liquorice all help to speed up the transit time of the gut.

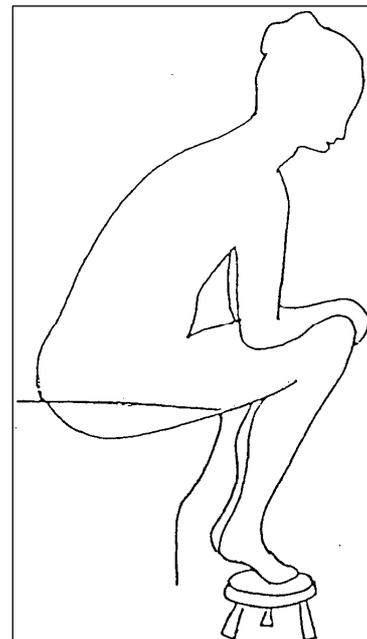
Softer motions are much easier to pass.

Try to drink plenty of water, especially if you are taking 'over the counter' remedies for constipation.

Are there any other ways to help?

These tips may be helpful to avoid straining:

- Sit comfortably on the loo seat.
- Check that your knees are higher than your hips. A footstool may help.
- Rest your forearms onto your knees.



- Relax your jaw.
- Pull up the pelvic floor muscles. As you let go, slacken the abdominal wall and make a gentle effort to widen your waist.
- Grunt!

Are there any other ways to help (continued)?

- Do not consciously hold your breath.
- Sustain the feeling of 'bulging and bracing' while you feel the contents passing through the back passage.
- Once you feel you have finished emptying your bowels, draw up firmly with the pelvic floor muscles to reinforce the closing reflex at the end of defecation.

Your physiotherapist will talk you through this leaflet and help you with your pelvic floor exercises.

What should I do if I have further questions?

Should you have any questions, please call your named physiotherapist, or leave a message for the Women's Health Physiotherapy team lead.

Contact numbers:

Physiotherapy Department, Royal Sussex County Hospital: 01273 523050

Physiotherapy Department, Princess Royal Hospital: 01444 448264

Further information:

The Bladder and Bowel Foundation:

www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org

St Mark's Hospital: St. Mark's Hospital is a national and international referral centre for intestinal and colorectal disorders. They have a very thorough Patient Information section on their website.

<http://stmarkshospital.org.uk>

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Disclaimer

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

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If you do not understand this leaflet, we can arrange for an interpreter.

إذا كنت لا تستطيع فهم محتويات هذه النشرة فيمكننا عمل الترتيبات لتوفير مترجم شفوي لك.

এই পত্রিকাটি যদি আপনি বুঝতে না পারেন, তবে আমাদের অন্য ভাষায় পত্রিকা অনুবাদ করে দেয়া করা দিবে।

如果您不明白本單張的內容，我們可安排口譯員服務。

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اگر مندرجات این جزوه را نمی فهمید، ما می توانیم مترجم در اختیارتان بگذاریم.

Jeśli masz trudności w zrozumieniu tej ulotki, możemy zorganizować tłumacza.