

Coping with constipation

Sussex Cancer Network



Nutrition and Dietetics Department

Why have I developed constipation?

Constipation may occur as a result of your treatment or some medications in particular pain control. You may need a laxative to help resolve and manage the problem. Let your doctor, nurse specialist or radiographer know you are having difficulty and if necessary a suitable laxative can be prescribed for you.

What can I do to help?

The following tips may help to manage constipation:-

- Try to drink plenty of fluids, at least 8-10 cups each day (2 litres). Hot or cold drinks will be helpful. These can include water, fruit juice, including prune juice, tea, coffee and squash
- eat at regular intervals, aim for 3 small meals and 3 snacks per day, try to eat something every 2-3 hours
- try to include foods high in fibre in your diet. Good sources of fibre include :-
 - Wholemeal bread and breakfast cereals, like porridge, Weetabix and Shredded wheat.
 - fruit and vegetables, mix fresh fruit or a chopped banana through your cereal, milk pudding or yoghurt. If you are having difficulty with vegetables why not make them into a soup
 - lentils, beans and pulses. Try a pulse based soup like lentil or pea and ham. Have baked beans as part of a meal or as a snack on toast.
 - wholegrain/oat biscuits such as Digestives, Hobnobs or flapjack would be good in between meals.
 - jacket potatoes or potato wedges are a good source of fibre if you eat the skins.
 - try to eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day, which not only adds fibre but also vitamins and minerals. Vegetables can be added to soups, stews and casseroles. Fruit can be fresh, stewed or dried.

What about exercise?

Try to do some gentle exercise every day, such as a short walk. This will help to keep the bowels moving.

What if I've got no appetite?

Many people with cancer find there are times when they can't eat as much or as well as usual.

If you are having difficulty with eating and drinking, speak to your nurse specialist, radiographer or doctor and they may refer you to the dietitian for individualised help.

Sussex Cancer Centre – useful numbers

Radiotherapy treatment reception 01273 664901

Chemotherapy suite 01273 696955 Ext. 4799

Howard 1 oncology ward 01273 696955 Ext. 4051

Macmillan Dietitians 01273 696955 Ext. 4208 / 4290

Questions about living with cancer?

Call Macmillan free on 0808 808 00 00 or visit macmillan.org.uk

The Royal Sussex County Hospital
Eastern Road, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 5BE

(01273) 696955

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics – Extension 4290
Sussex Cancer Centre Dietitian – Extension 4208

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 প্রচারপুস্তিকাটি যদি আপনি বুঝতে না পারেন, তবে আপনার জন্য আমরা একজন অনুবাদকের ব্যবস্থা করে দিতে পারি

如你不明白本單張的內容，我們可安排口譯員服務。

如你不明白本传单的内容，我们可安排口译员服务。

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

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

Produced by Macmillan Oncology Dietitian Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust

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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.

Ref number: 408

Publication Date: November 2011 Review Date: November 2013



carer and patient information group approved