

## ***Hints to Help with Constipation***

One of the most important goals of Moffitt Cancer Center is to provide you with quality patient care through education, research and service. The following information was developed to help you manage constipation. Your doctor or nurse will review this with you and answer any questions you may have.

### ***What are some causes of constipation?***

- Certain types of chemotherapy drugs
- Some medications, especially pain medicines
- Not having enough fluids, fiber or roughage in your diet
- Lack of exercise/ activity
- Pressure on the bowel from tumors or fluid in the abdomen

### ***What can I do to help avoid constipation?***

- **Follow your doctor's instructions** for taking stool softeners and/or laxatives when prescribed.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Warm fluids may be helpful in stimulating your bowel.
- Stay as active as you can. Do as much walking or exercising as you can tolerate.
- Allow enough time each day for bowel movements and respond immediately to the urge to go.

### ***Things to remember:***

1. Call your doctor if you have a change in your bowel habits, such as:
  - You go **three** days without a stool.
  - Your stool becomes difficult to pass, even with a stool softener or laxative.
  - Your stool becomes watery.
2. It is important that you follow your doctor's instructions for taking a stool softener or laxative. It is better for your body and easier to prevent constipation than it is to treat it after it happens.
3. Skipping a dose or not taking your stool softener may result in serious constipation.

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