

Healthy Living: Tips for Staying Regular¹

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Staying regular means avoiding constipation!

Constipation means having a bowel movement fewer than three times a week. Stools are usually hard and can be painful to pass. Constipation is common among older adults.

Why is constipation a concern?

Over time, constipation can result in hemorrhoids, diverticulosis, and the inability to have a bowel movement.

What causes constipation?

- Not eating enough fiber
- Taking certain medications
- Limited physical activity
- Overuse of laxatives
- Dehydration

How can I prevent constipation?

- Eat foods with fiber every day.
- Stay physically active!
- Drink enough fluids every day to avoid dehydration.
- Use a fiber supplement if you are not able to eat enough dietary fiber every day. Talk to your doctor before using fiber supplements.

What foods contain fiber?

- High-fiber cereals
- Bran muffins
- Beans (like kidney, pinto, and black beans)
- High-fiber bread
- Fruits and vegetables
- Popcorn and nuts

For more information about fiber, see *Facts about Fiber* at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy849> and *Guide to Fiber Supplements* at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fs162>.



Figure 1. Legumes are great sources of dietary fiber as well as many other nutrients.

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