

Pain Management Clinic

Constipation Caused by Pain Medicine

Some pain medicines can cause mild to severe constipation in some people.

Talk to your healthcare provider

- ☆ Before following these instructions if constipation is already a problem for you.
- ☆ If you follow these instructions and still have constipation.

Diet changes might help

- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids every day.
- ✓ Include a natural laxative in your daily diet such as prunes or prune juice.
- ✓ Increase fibre in your diet.
(Example - Prune Treat)
- ✓ Eat meals and snacks at regular times each day.
- ✓ Drink hot beverages – it might help to stimulate your bowel.

Do not take 'bulk-forming' laxatives (such as Metamucil). They might make constipation worse. Stool softeners (such as Docusate) do not work well for constipation caused by pain medicines.

Remember, you do not need to have a bowel movement every day. Bowel movements should be soft and not painful.

If you are still constipated

If you do not have a bowel movement for 3 or 4 days, talk to your pharmacist about taking a laxative. (There are different types.)

Try a laxative like a PEG laxative (such as RestoraLAX, Lax-a-day). **Before you try PEG**, talk to your doctor. You might need to take a PEG laxative regularly.

If you are taking an opioid like morphine, you can take a stimulant laxative like sennosides (Senokot) or bisacodyl (Dulcolax) regularly.

You might need to take either or both PEG or a stimulant laxative every day.

Prune Treat

Recipe

- ½ cup cooked dates
- ½ cup cooked prunes
- ½ cup raisins
- ¼ cup orange juice
- ⅓ cup prune juice (can also add figs)

Blend everything together to look like molasses.
Keep in the refrigerator.

Start with 1 tablespoon of Prune Treat a day.
Have more or less Prune Treat, depending on how it works for you.