

# Constipation from Clozapine

## Treating with PEG and Sennosides

Clozapine slows down your gut and causes constipation. Even though you might not be constipated now, it is best to take a laxative when you start taking clozapine. If the constipation is not treated, your gut could become partly or completely blocked.

To keep from getting constipated, start taking the medicine checked off for you:

- ☐ Polyethylene glycol (PEG) Routine
- ☐ Sennosides Routine

\* Follow the instructions on this sheet *only after* talking with your doctor or pharmacist.

### What can I do every day?

- Drink 6 to 8 glasses (1½ to 2 litres) of liquid, unless you have been told differently because of a medical condition. Your best choices are water, milk, soup, and broth.
- Add high fibre foods in your diet (25 to 30 grams) including whole grains, bran, fruits, vegetables, and lentils.
- Do at least 30 minutes of physical activity such as walking, swimming, or other exercise.
- Create a routine for your gut. Make time for bowel movements.
- Don't ignore the need to go!
- Compare your bowel movements to the table on page 2 and follow your laxative routine as directed.
- **Do not** take any bulk forming laxatives with psyllium such as Metamucil, or any other laxatives. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist first.

### How do I take the laxative?

Try to keep your bowel movements in the Green Zone.

1. Use the laxative routine checked off for you.
2. Follow the directions in the Green Zone.
3. Move through each zone and step until your bowel movements are like those described in the Green Zone.
4. Continue with the laxative routine that keeps your bowel movements in the Green Zone.

If you get loose stools or diarrhea, do either of these steps:

- Go back to a previous step.
- Reduce or stop the laxative in the order that you added them.

### When should I get help?

Contact your doctor or pharmacist in any of these situations:

- You are not sure how much laxative to take.
- You are not sure when to move to the next step or back to the previous step.
- You have really bad stomach pains or cramps that last for more than 1 hour.
- You have stomach cramps plus any of these: throwing up, very bloated, diarrhea with blood, very bad headache, or fever, chills, and dizziness.
- You are still constipated after following Steps 1 to 5.
- You have watery stools after being constipated for 5 or more days – this is not diarrhea. Do not take diarrhea pills.

	What to watch for		Directions	
	Signs	Bowel Movements	<input type="checkbox"/> PEG Routine Start with PEG 17g at bedtime	<input type="checkbox"/> Sennosides Routine Start with Sennosides 8.6mg (1 tablet) at bedtime
<b>Green Zone</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bowel movement every 1 to 3 days</li> <li>No straining or stomach pains</li> <li>Good appetite</li> </ul>	sausage shaped with cracks in the surface <b>or</b> smooth, soft sausage or snake shape	Continue with the laxative routine that keeps you in the Green Zone	Continue with the laxative routine that keeps you in the Green Zone
<b>Yellow Zone</b>	<b>Step 1</b>		<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Step 1</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No bowel movement after 3 days</li> <li>Straining, bloating, stomach cramps</li> </ul>	lumpy and sausage shaped <b>or</b> separate, hard lumps	PEG 17g in the morning PEG 17g at bedtime	Sennosides 17.2mg (2 tablets) at bedtime
	<b>Step 2</b>		<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Step 2</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still constipated after 1 to 2 days <b>or</b> No bowel movement after 4 days</li> <li>Straining, bloating, stomach cramps</li> </ul>	lumpy and sausage shaped <b>or</b> separate, hard lumps	PEG 17g in the morning PEG 17g at bedtime Sennosides 8.6mg (1 tablet) at bedtime	Sennosides 17.2mg (2 tablets) in the morning Sennosides 17.2mg (2 tablets) at bedtime
<b>Red Zone</b>	<b>Step 3</b>		<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Step 3</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still constipated after 1 to 2 days <b>or</b> No bowel movement after 5 days</li> <li>Straining, bloating, stomach cramps</li> </ul>	lumpy and sausage shaped <b>or</b> separate, hard lumps	PEG 17g in the morning PEG 17g at bedtime Sennosides 17.2mg (2 tablets) at bedtime	Sennosides 17.2mg (2 tablets) in the morning Sennosides 17.2mg (2 tablets) at bedtime PEG 17g at bedtime
	<b>Step 4</b>		<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Step 4</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still constipated after 1 to 2 days <b>or</b> No bowel movement after 6 days</li> <li>Bloating, stomach cramps, leaking watery stool</li> </ul>	lumpy and sausage shaped <b>or</b> separate, hard lumps	PEG 17g in the morning Sennosides 17.2mg (2 tablets) in the morning PEG 17g at bedtime Sennosides 17.2mg (2 tablets) at bedtime	Sennosides 17.2mg (2 tablets) in the morning PEG 17g in the morning Sennosides 17.2mg (2 tablets) at bedtime PEG 17g at bedtime
	<b>Step 5</b>		<b>Step 5</b>	<b>Step 5</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Still constipated after 1 to 2 days <b>or</b> No bowel movement after 7 days</li> </ul>	separate, hard lumps	Call your doctor or get medical help as soon as possible.	Call your doctor or get medical help as soon as possible.

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.