

Advanced Urogynecologic Care

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Bowel Management Program

Changes in diet may help to improve bowel habits. The amount of fiber in your diet and the amount of water that you drink play an important role in maintaining the proper consistency of stool. Fiber acts like a sponge. When you take fiber with plenty of water the fiber holds onto the water and becomes soft like a wet sponge. If you tend to be constipated, gradually increasing the amount of fiber in your diet will help to make your stool softer. Some patients benefit from taking additional stool softeners such as docusate sodium (Colace), which further helps to soften the stool.

Recommendations:

1. 25 to 30 grams of fiber per day.
2. You may take a fiber supplement such as Metamucil, Citrucel, Fibercon tablets, Konsyl, Benefiber or other fiber supplements.
3. You should drink at least 10 glasses of water per day.
4. Juice or milk may be substituted for water. Beverages with caffeine and alcoholic beverages do not count. Caffeine and alcohol can both be dehydrating.
5. Docusate sodium (Colace) 100mg capsule 2 times per day.
6. MiraLAX once a day.
7. Probiotics (Align) or Activia yogurt.
8. Aloe for bowels
9. Kondremul (mineral oil)
10. **Magnesium citrate supplements**

Tips for increasing the fiber in your diet:

- How much fiber are you currently taking? It is helpful to first see how much fiber you are already taking on a daily basis. Record for one day the amount of fiber that you eat to see how close you are to your goal.
- Increase your fiber intake gradually. Some people experience gas, bloating or diarrhea when they begin to eat large amounts of fiber. Increasing the amount of fiber in your diet slowly, about 5 grams every 2-3 days, will help your body adjust to the extra fiber.
- Substituting high fiber foods for similar lower fiber foods may increase dietary fiber. Eat whole wheat instead of white bread. Use brown instead of white rice. A baked potato with the skin on has twice as much fiber than a boiled potato without the skin.
- Sprinkle bran fiber on spaghetti sauce, sloppy Joes, meatloaf or casserole.

Tips for Better Bowel Control of Bowel Accidents:

1. Fibercon: A 'bulking agent', take at bedtime, 1-2 tablets, with small amount of water.
2. After breakfast, try to have a bowel movement.
3. Moderate fiber diet
4. Consider Gluten-Free if the above fails to improve your symptoms
5. Kegel Exercises - see instructions below. If no improvement after trying these exercises on your own, consider seeing a specialized pelvic floor physical therapist.