

## ***Patient Post-Operative Bowel Prevention***

Having surgery puts you at higher risk of developing constipation, which can lead to an obstruction or other bowel problems. Contributing factors include anesthesia, stress, dietary changes, decreased activity, and the use of narcotic pain medication.

It is important that you take a *pro-active* approach to preventing constipation from occurring.

### **Diet and Exercise**

- Drink 6-8 glasses (8 oz) of liquid each day. Recommended liquids are water, juices and milk. Limit the amount of caffeine, including coffee, tea, or soda.
- High fiber foods can help promote a bowel movement. High fiber foods include fiber or bran cereals, oatmeal, beans, vegetables, and whole grain breads. Prune juice may help soften bowel movements.
- Exercise can promote GI motility. If appropriate, daily walking is encouraged.

### **Medication Points**

- You will need to take preventative bowel medications (i.e. stool softeners/stimulants) after surgery. These preventative medications should **continue** after discharge while you take narcotic pain medication at home.
- Bowel medications can be individualized depending on your needs and response.
- All of the recommended medications are available over-the-counter at local pharmacies or drug/grocery stores.

### **Recommendations**

	<b>Medication</b>	<b>Alternative</b>
<b>Scheduled (Take twice a day)</b>	<b>Docosate-Senna</b> 50mg/8.6mg combination (Senna-S®) (Peri-Colace®) (Sennokot-S®)  1-2 tabs twice daily	<b>Docosate sodium</b> 100mg (Colace®) stool softener  1-2 tab twice daily  +  <b>Senna</b> 187mg (sennosides 8.6mg) mild stimulant laxative  1-2 tab twice daily
<b>Take if Needed</b>	<b>MiraLax®</b> 17 gm (one heaping tablespoon of powder) osmotic laxative  Mix in 120-240ml of fluid as needed 1-2 times per day	<b>Milk of Magnesia</b> saline laxative/antacid  30ml once daily as needed
<b>If no bowel movement within 3 days</b>	<b>Bisacodyl</b> 10mg rectal suppository (Ducolax® suppository) stimulant laxative  1 suppository (10mg) per rectum once daily as needed	<b>Seek medical care if:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe abdominal pain, swelling or vomiting</li> <li>• No bowel movement in 5-7 days</li> <li>• Fever for 24-48 hours with unknown cause</li> </ul>