## CONSTIPATION



# A relatively common condition in adults and children

#### Signs

- Infrequent passage of stools (poo)
  less than 3 times/week or less often than your usual
- Passage of dry, hard stools, often accompanied by straining or pain
- Faecal leakage (overflow of poo), often mistaken for diarrhoea



#### Causes

- · Not eating enough fibre
- Not drinking enough fluid
- Poor dietary intake
- Not enough physical activity
- Medications/Illness



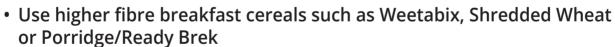




When constipated you can feel full - try to eat little and often

#### Ideas to increase fibre





- Choose wholegrain pasta, rice or mix some into the white varieties
- Eat more fruit and vegetables (aim for 5 portions a day) try raw vegetables, fruit salads, dried fruit or add extra vegetables to soups



- · Leave skins on fruit, vegetables and potatoes
- Add beans and pulses to meals try kidney beans, baked beans in chilli; chopped nuts in stir-fries; nut butter on sandwiches; lentils in soups, stews or curries
- · Use wholemeal flour, oats, dried fruits and nuts in baking



NOTE: Fruit juices and smoothies contain only a very small amount of fibre





#### **Fluids**

Not drinking enough can lead to hard stools which are difficult to pass



- Normally recommended 6-8 cups per day
- Increase to 10 cups per day when constipated
- Water, diluting juice, milk, tea, coffee and soups (all count)



## **Physical activity (PA)**

- Is important and helps to stimulate the bowel
- Aim for 150 minutes moderate intensity PA per week
- Reduce sedentary behaviour, for example when watching TV, playing computer games, phone, etc
- Chair exercises can be an option for those with limited mobility





### **Correct positioning for opening your bowels**



Knees higher than hips Lean forwards and put elbows on your knees Bulge out your abdomen

Straighten your spine







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