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# Pain Management for Bowels

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Pain medications can slow bowels down and cause constipation. Here are a few things you can do to keep your bowel movements regular:

- Eat foods that contain good bacteria or probiotics.
- Eat prunes and products made from prunes. These foods can help soften your bowels.
- Eat foods that contain fiber. NOTE: Add fiber slowly into your diet if you do not already eat a diet high in fiber-rich foods. Include water (at least 6 glasses each day) otherwise you could develop gas, bloating, diarrhea, or constipation.

## Probiotic foods

Foods that provide “good bacteria” or probiotics will help your digestive system work its best. These foods have typically been fermented or cultured. Some examples include:

- Yogurt with live cultures. Look for yogurt with:
  - **Bifidobacteria.** These strains of bacteria are abbreviated with a “B” on the nutrition label’s list of ingredients.
  - **Lactobacillus.** These strains of bacteria are abbreviated with an “L” on the nutrition label’s list of ingredients.
- Kefir (a yogurt beverage, found in the dairy section of the grocery store)
- Sauerkraut or kimchi (fermented cabbage)
- Miso or tempeh (fermented soy products)

## Prunes

Prunes and prune products can soften bowels. Start by adding a small amount at each meal. For example, add 2 prunes with breakfast, a small glass of prune juice with lunch, and 2 prunes with your evening meal.

## High Fiber Foods

**Eat 2-4 cups of fruit each day**

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- Choose fresh or frozen fruit instead of juice, canned, or peeled fruit.
  - Have fruit as a snack between meals, such as a banana, pear, or apple.
  - Add fruit to cereals, salads, yogurt, or cottage cheese.

**Eat 3 or more cups of vegetables each day.**

- Choose fresh vegetables instead of canned.
- Use frozen vegetables (without sauce).
- Add lettuce, tomatoes and other vegetables to sandwiches.
- Use vegetables in a stir-fry or cut up fresh vegetables and enjoy with a low-fat dip.

**Eat at least 3 ounces of whole grain each day.**

- Choose whole grain cereals with 5 grams or more of fiber per serving.
- Choose whole grain breads with 3 grams or more of fiber per serving.
- The first ingredient in breads and cereals should be “whole grain” or “whole wheat.”
- Choose brown rice, wild rice, barley, or quinoa instead of white rice.
- Add oat or wheat bran when baking muffins, cookies, pancakes, waffles, or meatloaf.
- Add wheat germ to yogurt or hot cereal.

**Eat at least ½ cup of dried beans, peas, potatoes with skin, or corn a few times a week.**

- Dried beans can be a replacement in recipes for animal protein.
- Use cooked dry beans, peas, or corn in soups, stews, side dishes, dips, casseroles, salads, and pastas.
- Add dried beans, peas, or corn to tacos, burritos, or rice.
- Use cooked and cooled unpeeled potatoes or whole grain pasta to make salads.

**Mix high fiber foods into your daily food choices.**

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- Add nuts or seeds to breakfast cereal, yogurt, salads, and desserts.
  - Add a small handful of nuts or dried fruit to trail-mix for snack.
  - Try a new flavor on your dinner plate: add avocado to salsa to make guacamole dip; grill or bake squash.
  - Edamame (green soy beans) can be steamed, boiled, or eaten as a fiber rich appetizer.

Foods with added fiber are also available at grocery stores such as cereal, granola bars, pasta, yogurt, and high fiber soups