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BOWEL MANAGEMENT REGIMEN

Bowel management consists of supplementing the diet with 3 to 6 grams of fiber per day, taken as powder, capsule or wafer form. The products most commonly used products are

- Psyllium (Metamucil, Konsyl)
- Methylcellulose (Citrucel)
- Guar Gum (Benefiber)

Fiber must be consumed with copious amounts of noncaffeinated, non alcoholic, non carbonated beverages.

1. Eat a Fiber Supplement (Metamucil, Konsyl, Citrucel or Benefiber)
1 tablespoon three times daily with liquids
2. Take docusate tablets, 100mg three times daily with liquids
3. Take Polyethylene Glycol (Miralax, Glycolax) Powder, 17 gram dose, 1 capful per day with liquids if constipated.
4. Drink 2000 cc water per day.
5. Do not read while sitting on the toilet.
6. Do not spend more than five minutes or strain while sitting on the toilet.
7. Daily aerobic exercise such as walking, running, swimming, bicycle or stairmaster.

PERIANAL SKIN CARE REGIMEN

1. Use barrier Creams, with zinc oxide or lanolin base. (Calmoseptine, Desitin, Balmex, Lantiseptic) Apply around the anal area 3-4 times daily and at bedtime
2. Place gauze or cotton over the anal opening between the buttocks. Change every 3-4 hours or when soiled.
3. Use nonmedicated moistened wipes to clean the anal area.
4. Avoid rubbing excessively.
5. DO NOT USE PRODUCTS WITH WITCH HAZEL, ALCOHOL, PEROXIDE, OR STEROIDS.
6. DO NOT USE PERFUMED SOAPS OR OILS. Ivory soap or Neutrogena is or hypoallergenic soaps are best.
7. Change undergarments frequently if soiled or wet.

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Bowel Management

High Fiber Diet

A high fiber diet is the basis for bowel management. The best source of fiber is wheat bran, although oat, rye, and other cereals are also good sources. Bran comes from the outer husk of the cereal kernel, whereas the germ is from the core. The product “wheat germ” does not contain bran. Products such as bran cereal, whole wheat breads and miller’s bran are good sources of fiber.

An example of a fiber-rich breakfast is a bowl of bran cereal that has 5 to 7 grams of dietary fiber per serving along with a glass of milk and/or juice. Each box of cereal has the amount of dietary fiber printed on the side of the box. Alternatives include a bran muffin or mixing 2 or 3 tablespoons of miller’s bran in hot cereal.

Fiber Supplements

The major function of the colon is to absorb water and change the liquid stool that enters the small intestine to a solid stool that is passed during bowel movements. Fiber supplements or bulking agents function in the same way as dietary fiber and bran. They are taken by mouth once or twice a day. As fiber travels through bowel, it absorbs water and causes the stool to remain moist and soft, instead of hard and dry. The following table provides information about some of the most commonly used fiber supplements.

It is recommended to take 3 to 6 grams of fiber supplements 1 to 2 times per day.

A Sample of Supplemental Fiber Preparations

Product	Type of Fiber	Amount / Serving
Benefiber	Guar gum	3.0 g/serving
Citrucel power	Methyl cellulose	2.0 g/tablespoon
Citrucel capsules	Methyl cellulose	1.0 g/ capsule
FiberCon	Polycarbophil	500 mg/tablet
Konsyl powder	Psyllium	6.0 g/teaspoon
Konsyl tablets	Polycarbophil	500 mg/tablet
Metamucil powder	Psyllium	3.0 g/tablespoon powder
Metamucil capsules	Psyllium	0.5 g/capsule
Metamucil wafer	Psyllium	3.0 g/wafer

Fluids

Since the major function of fiber is to hold fluid in the stool, it is important to take in enough water. At least 6 to 8 glasses of water should be taken each day. Without adequate water intake, fiber can become hard and dry.

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Stool Softeners

Stool softeners act to lubricate the stools, allowing them to pass more easily. They are not laxatives. The most commonly used over-the-counter stool softeners contain docusate and are inexpensive. **The directions provided with the medication should be followed and not exceeded.**

Bowel Movements

Regularity is important; however, it is not necessary to have a bowel movement everyday. Normal bowel habits range from three movements per day to one movement every three days. Avoid straining and prolonged sitting on the toilet. If a bowel movement does not occur in 3 to 5 minutes, get up and return to the bathroom later.

Pain and Bleeding

If bleeding or anorectal pain develops, please see your doctor as soon as possible.

Perianal Medications

Most perianal medications have no proven benefit. Use of topical steroids is not recommended. Symptoms of pain and bleeding should prompt a visit to the doctor, rather than treating oneself.

For patients with perianal irritation and skin breakdown, who have been seen by a physician, the use of certain barrier creams may prove beneficial. These creams use either zinc oxide or lanolin to protect the perianal skin with a protective barrier against stool, mucus and blood. Some such products are Desitin, Balmex, Calmoseptine, and Lantiseptic.

Many patients find the use of nonmedicated moistened wipes more comfortable than standard toilet paper. The products may be purchased in the infant care section of a supermarket or pharmacy.

For symptoms such as soreness, bleeding, or irritation, try taking a warm bath after each bowel movement if possible. If not, try a warm bath 2 or 3 times daily for 10 minutes. Do not use oils or salts in the bath water, and pat the area dry rather than rubbing. Do not use creams, ointments, or oils around the anus unless prescribed by your doctor.