



## POSTOPERATIVE CONSTIPATION GUIDELINES

Following your surgery there are many factors that contribute to constipation, including your narcotic pain medications, immobility, pain, and alterations in your food and fluid intake. We recommend starting a simple bowel routine immediately following your surgery to help prevent constipation, and offer the guidelines below for use as needed to help you feel more comfortable. All medications are over the counter.

### Daily After Your Surgery:

- Get up and walk at least three times per day to help encourage bowel motility.
- Drink at least 6-8 glasses of water per day.
- Over the counter **Docusate**. Take one to two times daily.
- Take a fiber bulking agent 1-3 times daily (**Metamucil, FiberCon, Benefiber**).

### First Line as Needed Over the Counter:

- Over the counter **Senokot-S** (Senna-docusate 8.6mg/50mg) take two tablets twice daily (hold for loose stools). Onset of action: 6-12 hours. **\*You may also buy Senna and Docusate separately, take two tablets of 8.6 mg Senna twice daily and two tablets of 100 mg Docusate sodium once daily.**
- Miralax** (Polyethylene Glycol) 17 grams dissolved in 8 ounces of water, juice, or tea once daily as needed. Onset of action: 1-3 days.
- Dulcolax** (Bisacodyl) 10 mg orally once daily as needed. Onset of action: 6-12 hours.
- Milk of Magnesia** (Magnesium Hydroxide) 30 ml orally twice daily as needed. Onset of action: 30 minutes – 8 hours.

### Second Line as Needed Over the Counter:

- Fleet Enema** (Phosphate Enema) 120 mg rectally once daily as needed. Onset of action 15-60 minutes.
- Magnesium Citrate** 150 to 300 ml (1.745g/30 ml solution) orally once daily as needed. Onset of action: 1-6 hours.
- Dulcolax suppository** (Bisacodyl suppository) 10 mg rectally once daily. Onset of action: 15-60 minutes.