

PREVENTING CONSTIPATION

Opioid pain medication can be **VERY CONSTIPATING!** Many patients tell us that they have more discomfort from constipation than from their surgical procedure one week after surgery. You will typically need to routinely take over-the-counter laxatives **twice a day** in order to have regular bowel movements while you are taking narcotic medications.

Your doctors recommend that you take:

- *Senokot-S two tabs in the morning and two tabs in the evening.
- *One capful (17 gm) of polyethylene glycol (Miralax) dissolved in a glass of water or juice twice daily. Note: If you still have constipation, take additional Miralax until you have a soft stool. You can't overdose on it, you will just get diarrhea.

If you start to get loose stools as you take less opioid pain medication, first decrease or stop the polyethylene glycol (Miralax), and then stop the others gradually as you have more regular bowel movements.

Other Treatments for constipation include:

- *Prune Juice
- *Smooth Move Tea
- *Psyllium Husk (Metamucil) or other types of fiber
- *Flax Seed (One teaspoon ground up, stirred into a glass of water or juice)
- *Drink lots of fluids
- *Walking also encourages the bowels to move

You may prefer a more natural approach, but often the opioid pain medication is so potent that the natural approach alone is inadequate!

Notify your physician if you do not have a bowel movement within 3 days of surgery!