



Urology Consultants, Ltd.

Center for Continence Care and Pelvic Medicine

CONSTIPATION

Many people with bladder control problems also suffer from constipation. Treating constipation is important because bowel issues often make bladder issues worse. The following suggestions may improve your constipation.

- **Place a 4-6 inch footstool or phone books under your feet.** This puts your knees higher than your hips, rocking your pelvis backward to allow for easier elimination through a wider pelvic outlet.
- **Do not hold your breath.** Breathe out as you bear down.
- **Do not bear down for more than six seconds at a time.** Push for up to six seconds, relax and repeat. This decreases the stress to the pelvic floor, and makes use of peristalsis. Peristalsis is the normal rhythmic contractions of the bowel that help to move stool.
- **Do not habitually hold back gas.** Retaining gas will cause cramping and slow bowel movements.
- **Take your time.** Plan to relax in quiet privacy, at the time of day that you usually feel the need to have a bowel movement. Reading while on the toilet is helpful.
- **Keep your body relaxed.** In addition to maintaining a relaxed pelvic floor, make sure the rest of your body is not tense. Relax your jaw, shoulders, buttocks, etc.
- **Increase your dietary fiber or use fiber supplements such as Benefiber®.** **When your constipation is more severe you can use a laxative such as MiraLAX.** Both can be purchased over the counter at your pharmacy.
- **Do the constipation massage as described below.**



Constipation Massage

1. Lie on your back (you can also do this while sitting on the toilet).
2. Locate your right hipbone and place your fingertips just to the inside of the bone. This is where your large intestine starts.
3. Slowly press down and make small circular motions (about 6 times) or long strokes.
4. Repeat these motions as you move your fingers along the path that goes up towards the ribcage, across, then down the left side of your abdomen.
5. Repeat the path several times.
6. Try to do this at the time of day when you normally have a bowel movement.
7. This massage can also help with gas and bloating.

