



## Central Texas Veterans Health Care System

# How to Prevent Constipation

### Primary Care Nutrition Tip

This handout provides only basic nutrition guidelines for this topic. See a Registered Dietitian (RD) for your individual needs. The Nutrition Clinic is a walk-in clinic (no appointment needed) in Austin, Temple and Waco and by appointment at CBOC's. Sign up with the clinic clerk to speak to a dietitian.

### **Other classes and programs available:**

**Diabetes Classes** - series of 3 classes with information from nursing, nutrition, pharmacy and activity specialists on how to manage your diabetes.

**Cardiovascular** - 3 hour class with nursing, nutrition and pharmacy information on heart health.

**Pre-Diabetes** – 90 minute class with nursing and nutrition information on reducing or delaying your chance of having diabetes. Available in Waco, Temple, Austin

**Renal** - 2 hour class with information from nursing and nutrition on kidney disease and management. Available in Temple, Austin

***MOVE!* Weight Management** - ***MOVE!*** is a national VA program designed to help veterans lose weight, keep it off and improve their health. ***MOVE!*** features a personalized program of nutrition, physical activity and behavior change. Visit [www.move.va.gov](http://www.move.va.gov) to find out more.

**Ask your Primary Care Team which of these classes is best for you and how to be enrolled.**

## How to Prevent Constipation



1. Use whole grain breads and cereals.
2. Use popcorn, nuts, and fruits for snacks.
3. Eat at least two servings of fruit a day, with at least one raw.
4. Eat at least three servings of vegetables a day, raw or cooked
5. Use fruit or fruit-based foods for dessert.

### Examples of High fiber foods:

#### BREADS

Bran muffins  
Cracked wheat bread  
Raisin bread  
Whole wheat bread  
Pumpernickel bread  
Rye crackers  
Dry rye bread  
Whole wheat crackers



#### CEREALS

Whole grain cereals with  
dried fruit and nuts  
Wheat germ  
Oatmeal  
Brown rice  
Wild rice

#### VEGETABLES

Raw or cooked

#### FRUITS

Fresh, frozen, or dried

#### DRIED BEANS AND PEAS

All varieties

#### SOUPS

Bean soup  
Pea soup  
Vegetable soup



#### POTATOES

Baked with skin

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Nuts & Seeds  
Popcorn

Read nutrition labels on foods to compare products and choose high fiber foods.

#### Other ideas:

1. Add fiber slowly to prevent gas, bloating or diarrhea.
2. Try adding several teaspoons a day of raw, unprocessed wheat bran to your food for added fiber. Do not eat raw bran dry.
3. Drink 8 cups or more of fluids per day such as water, milk, juice, tea or coffee.



### Helpful Habits include:

- Have regular mealtimes, no skipped meals.
- Chew your food well.
- Eat slowly.
- Be more active. Get some daily exercise.
- Use the bathroom at a regular time each day. Choose a time when you won't have to rush.
- Get 7-8 hours sleep (per 24 hours).

