

Constipation is a decrease in a person's typical number of bowel movements. This number varies from person to person. Symptoms of constipation include bloating, abdominal distention or discomfort, hard stools, straining, and gas.

Constipation occurs when stool becomes hard inside the bowel and/or is difficult to expel.

SOME OF THE CAUSES MAY BE:

- Not drinking enough water.
- Not enough fiber in the diet.
- Certain medications.
- Lack of activity.
- Slowing down of the digestive system due to aging.
- Certain illnesses such as Parkinson's disease and diabetes.

It is important to have regular bowel movements even when eating only small amounts of food. Work with the Big Bend Hospice team to come up with a proactive plan to prevent constipation or to treat it effectively. Tell Big Bend Hospice about all over-the-counter medications being used as well as prescription medications.

SOME EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTIONS THAT CAN PREVENT OR TREAT CONSTIPATION:

- Prune juice.
- Stool softeners.
- Laxative tablets.
- Laxative liquids.
- Suppositories.
- Enemas.

Early detection of constipation allows for less invasive interventions and avoids possible future discomfort. Talk to the Big Bend Hospice team about bowel habits.

NOTES TO DISCUSS WITH THE NURSE:

Call Big Bend Hospice if the constipation is not relieved or getting worse.

Remember, Big Bend Hospice is here to support you. Call your Big Bend Hospice team if you have any questions or concerns at (850) 878-5310.