

Diarrhea is an abnormal looseness of the stools that may be accompanied by stomach cramping. Patients with uncontrolled diarrhea are at increased risk for dehydration, electrolyte imbalance, skin breakdown, and fatigue.

If diarrhea is present keep a record of how often it occurs and notify the Big Bend Hospice nurse.

WHAT TO DO:

- Offer a bedpan or commode at least every two hours, or more often if needed.
- Increase fluid intake and encourage sipping slowly.
- Offer clear fruit juices (not fruit) as well as water. Avoid drinks with caffeine.
- Give frequent small meals such as oatmeal, strawberries, potatoes, apricots, pears, bananas, rice, applesauce or toast/crackers.
- Make sure all laxatives and stool softeners have been discontinued.
- After each loose stool, wash the rectal area with mild soap and water and apply skin protective lotion.

CALL BIG BEND HOSPICE WITH ANY QUESTIONS OR IF THERE IS:

- Blood in the stool.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Increased abdominal pain.

NOTES TO DISCUSS WITH THE NURSE:

- Make sure the commode or bedpan is readily available nearby.
- If in bed, place in a sitting position for a bowel movement by raising the head of the bed.
- Do not remain on the bedpan/commode for long periods of time.
- Always wash hands after using the toilet, commode or bedpan.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

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.