

### **AVOIDING CONSTIPATION PROTOCOL**

Before your operation, when you are taking iron tablets, and possibly pain medications, constipation can become a problem.

Again, after surgery, medications and immobility can cause constipation. Here are some tips to help with this common problem.

1. Drink 6-8 glasses water daily.
2. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.
3. Be aware of your bowel pattern - if you notice changes, then take action. If you miss 2 or 3 of your usual movements, or you begin to feel uncomfortable, you may need a gentle oral laxative.
4. Eat light meals 2 days prior to surgery.
5. Do not take laxatives the day before surgery.
6. Enemas are no longer given prior to surgery, so you will be a lot more comfortable if your bowels are regulated prior to surgery.

After surgery, most people do not move their bowels for about 3 days. This is normal as anesthesia and other medications slow down activity. Also, most people have decreased oral intake and decreased activity the first few days after the operation. This also slows bowel activity.

If your bowels have not moved or you feel uncomfortable 3 days after surgery, notify the nurse.

Bowel patterns return to normal after surgery when activity increases, appetite returns to normal, and you are able to eliminate pain medication as you start to feel better. Notify the office if you have any questions.