**Healthy Eating to Prevent Constipation**

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|  | **What is Constipation?**Constipation is the uncomfortable and infrequent passage of stools with slow bowel movements. This can pose risks if chronic.  |
|  | Signs of constipation include:* Bowels not opening for 3 days
* Bowels not opening 3 times per week
* Stools which are hard, dry, and difficult or painful to pass
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|  | Some of these ‘red flags’ can also indicate constipation:* Bleeding when passing stool
* Unexplained weight loss
* Iron deficiency anaemia
* Bloating or abdomenal distention
* Hard palpable mass
* Vomit or reflux
* History of colon cancer or inflammatory bowel disease
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|  | **Dietary Changes to prevent constipation**Drink plenty of water, at least 8 full glasses daily. This hydrates stool. Other decaffeinated drinks also help, like milk, herbal tea, and juice. |
|  | Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, and remove tough skins such as on squash or banana. Aim for at least 5-a-day to boost your fibre. |
|  | Have at least 2 kiwis or a handful of dried prunes (80g per day) with plenty of water. These are a source of prebiotics. |
|  | Sprinkle 1-4tbsp of linseeds, flaxseeds or chia seeds daily onto food such as cereal, salad, soup or smoothies. These are also prebiotics. |
|  | Try live yoghurt, fermented foods, or probiotic drinks, powder or tablets for at least 2 weeks. Probiotics promote good gut health. |
|  | Try wholegrain cereal, bread and pasta rather than white, and try beans and pulses like lentils and peas. These are a source of fibre. |
|  | **Physical Changes to prevent constipation**Aim for at least 30minutes of physical activity per day, this will help to keep the bowel moving. |
|  | Take regular toilet breaks, and ensure correct positioning:* sit with knees higher than hips
* lean forwards
* bulge out abdomen
* straighten spine
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|  | Monitor stool output and frequency of bowel motions on a bowel chart using the Bristol Stool Chart. |

**Bristol Stool Chart**



**Bowel Chart**

