

Constipation

Constipation or difficulty having a bowel movement is common for people with a serious illness. Cramps and pain associated with bowel movements may also be constipation.

Constipation can have several causes: not drinking enough water or fluids, slowing down of bodily functions, or as a side effect of some medications. Eating and drinking can be challenging for patients because of decreased appetite, energy level, and comfort when swallowing.

Simple ways to help with constipation

- Drink or sip small amounts of water throughout the day.
- Walk, move, or perform light activity.
- Ask if your hospice care team recommends a stool softener or mild laxative.
- Ensure privacy when using the bathroom. Some people may avoid having a bowel movement when others are around.

Talk with your hospice care team for recommendations that may make it easier to go to the bathroom.