

Managing Constipation While on Opioid Pain Medications



After surgery, you may be prescribed opioid pain medications such as oxycodone or hydromorphone. These medications will slow down the bowel and can cause constipation. The following are steps you can take to try and prevent and/or treat constipation.

Steps to Prevent Constipation

- Drink at least 64 ounces of fluid daily.
- Maintain physical activity within required restrictions. Walking is great if you are not restricted from it.
- Eat plenty of fiber in your diet.
- We highly recommend taking an over-the-counter stool softener like docusate sodium (100 mgs. by mouth once or twice daily) while you are taking opioid pain medications.

Steps to Treat Constipation

Step 1:

- If prevention has not been successful, take Peri-Colace or Senokot-S (2 tablets by mouth twice daily). Hold for loose stools.

Step 2:

- If step 1 is not effective, you may try taking Milk of Magnesia (30 mLs by mouth twice daily as needed) or Miralax (by mouth daily) or Bisacodyl (by mouth once daily).

Step 3:

- If step 1 and 2 are not effective, administer a Fleet enema once a day as needed or take Magnesium citrate (150-300 mL by mouth once a day as needed).

**These medications are available without a prescription.*

If you have any questions concerning your medications after surgery, call our care coordinator at 407-821-3555.

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