

## Urology Department

# Hints for a healthy bowel

Sometimes our bowel does not work properly, but often simple life-style changes can help resolve these problems.

**This leaflet highlights good habits to help avoid bowel control problems, such as leakage and constipation**

### Diet

- Never miss breakfast
- Have a good fluid intake – 1½ - 2 litres a day (2½ - 3½ pints) **unless you have a restricted fluid intake for medical reasons**
- Eat regularly to encourage a pattern
- Fibre can improve your bowel habits
- Include five portions of fruit/vegetables a day in your diet

**Note:** Too much fibre can make things worse or cause wind

### Time

- Have a routine to benefit the bowel
- Often ½ an hour after a meal is a good time to try to have a bowel action
- Do not sit for ages on the toilet
- You should be able to empty the bowel with minimal effort
- Try not to strain
- Allow time and privacy to empty the bowel and relax



## Patient Information

- Do not ignore the need to empty the bowel
- If you ignore this you can make yourself constipated

## Exercise

- Regular exercise may stimulate a regular bowel

## Medication

- Review medication to check if any is aggravating your bowel symptoms

## Normal bowel emptying

- This can be anything between three times a day and three times a week

## Contact your doctor if:

- You see blood in your stools
- There is a change in your bowel habit that you cannot explain lasting more than a few days
- Unexplained loss of weight
- Pain in the abdomen
- Pain when passing a motion
- You cannot control your stools
- Leakage from back passage

## How common are bowel control problems?

About 1 in 50 people experience poor bowel control

There are effective treatments that can improve or cure the condition, for example, pelvic floor exercises. Information is available on this; please ask.

**Bowel diseases are not included as these may require medical advice.**

## Patient Information

### Further Information

For further information please contact the Urology Department

Telephone: 024 7696 5296

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 5296 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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