

## Tips

### Nutritional advice

A nutritionist can give you further information and individual advice. Ask your treatment team for a recommendation.

### Further information on this topic

- **«Understanding Chemotherapy»** (Cancer Council Australia, 2024) – Comprehensive guide explaining what chemotherapy is, how it works, and what to expect during treatment, including potential side effects and tips for managing them
- **«Nutrition for People Living with Cancer»** (Cancer Council Australia, 2025) – Practical guide on nutrition for people with cancer, their families, and friends

## Constipation

### Good to know




The frequency of bowel movements differs from person to person. Constipation means that the interval between bowel movements gets longer and the latter are made difficult by hard stools. When the bowel is not emptied properly this is also called constipation.

Constipation can be brought on by the disease and by drugs and treatments. Lack of exercise and not drinking enough sometimes make the problem worse.

Constipation is a problem that frequently occurs and is to be taken seriously. If you are suffering from constipation, talk to the treatment team about it. It is possible to prevent or to treat constipation. Ask the treatment team for advice about laxatives.



# Constipation

You feel...	Or you notice...	What you can do for yourself...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mild constipation</li></ul>	<p>If you have not been given other instructions from previous treatments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Fluid intake is important. Drink a lot, at least 1 to 1.5 litres a day.</li><li>Try warm and hot drinks (water, tea) and, if you like them, drink them in the morning on an empty stomach.</li><li>Exercise can help.</li><li>During this period you should try to avoid foods that you know from experience tend to give you constipation.</li><li>Foods high in fibre, for example wholemeal products, fruit and vegetables, can reduce constipation. Make sure that you drink enough.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The intervals between bowel movements are getting longer</li><li>A hard stool makes it more difficult to empty your bowels and causes pain</li><li>Nausea and bloating</li><li>The feeling of not having emptied your bowels properly after going to the toilet</li><li>Increasing abdominal pain and flatulence</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Take the prescribed medicines for constipation or ask your doctor to prescribe a suitable medicine. Do not take any laxatives on your own initiative since not every laxative is suitable for the treatment of your symptoms.</li><li>Make sure your visit to the toilet is stress-free by giving yourself enough time, preferably at the same time of day every day.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Severe abdominal pain and cramps</li><li>Persistent constipation</li><li>Projectile vomiting</li><li>Sudden onset of bloody stools</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Contact the treatment team.</li></ul>