Nutrition Therapy While Taking Pain Medications

Certain pain medications can cause constipation. These include opioid based medications like morphine, oxycodone, hydrocodone, tramadol and fentanyl. Drinking enough fluids and eating a higher fiber diet may help improve your bowel regimen.

Starting a new opioid medication may also cause nausea and vomiting. Eating smaller, more frequent meals and avoiding rich foods can help you feel more comfortable as your body adjusts.

Tips to Prevent and Treat Constipation

- Eat foods that contain more fiber. Fiber is typically highest in whole grains, vegetables, dried beans and peas, and fruits.
- Fluids help the body process fiber. Studies also show that not drinking enough fluids (dehydration) may increase how much pain you feel. Most individuals need at least 8 cups of fluids daily. Discuss fluid goals with a registered dietitian.
- Discuss trying probiotics with a registered dietitian as part of your meal plan. Probiotics provide "good" bacteria for the digestive system from foods that have been fermented or cultured. Consider addition of these foods:
    - Yogurt with live cultures (Bifidobacteria or Lactobacillus)
    - Kefir (a yogurt beverage)
    - Sauerkraut or kimchi (fermented cabbage)
    - Miso or tempeh (fermented soy foods)
- Consider adding prunes or prune juice to your daily meal plan. Start by adding a small amount to each meal. For example, add 2 prunes with breakfast, 4 ounces of prune juice with lunch, and 2 prunes with dinner.

How to Add Fiber into Daily Food Choices

- Slowly increase the amount of fiber in your diet. Increase fiber by no more than 5 grams daily until you reach your goal.
- Eat whole grain bread and cereals. Look for those with 100% whole wheat, rye, oats, or bran as the first or second ingredient.
- Choose brown or wild rice instead of white rice.
- Bake with whole grain flour. Whole wheat flour can be used to replace some or all white flour in recipes.
- Add oat or wheat bran when baking or add wheat germ to yogurt or cooked cereal.
- Add dried beans, lentils or peas to soups, side dishes or salads.
- Try dried beans as a replacement for animal protein.
- Leave skins on fruits and vegetables.

- Eat fruit as a snack between meals or add fruit to cereals, salads, yogurt, or cottage cheese.
- Add lettuce, tomato, or other vegetables to sandwiches.
- Eat fresh vegetables as a snack.
- Try vegetables in a stir-fry.
- Add nuts or seeds to cereal, yogurt, and salads.
- Select higher-fiber choices by comparing the fiber content of similar foods on the Nutrition Facts label.
- Foods with added fiber such as bread, cereal, granola bars, pasta and yogurt are also available at grocery stores.

How Much Fiber Do You Need?

	Grams/Day
Men 50 years and younger	38
Men 51 years and older	30
Women 50 years and younger	25
Women 51 years and older	21

Higher Fiber Foods Recommended

These foods provide at least 4 grams of fiber per serving.

Grains
¾ cup bran flakes 1 cup whole wheat pasta 1 cup cooked quinoa 1 cup instant oatmeal 1 cup brown rice (3.5 g fiber) Check Nutrition Facts label for cereals with 4 grams dietary fiber or more per serving.
Dried beans, Peas, Seeds, and Nuts
½ cup red, white, navy, kidney or pinto beans, lentils, split peas, or black-eyed peas (cooked) 1 Tablespoon Chia seeds 2 Tablespoons of flax seeds
Vegetables
1 artichoke (cooked) 1 medium white, red, or sweet potato (baked, with skin) ½ cup green peas (cooked) 1 cup sweet corn 1 cup cooked turnip or collard greens, Spinach, beet greens, cabbage, Brussel sprouts, chopped broccoli, cauliflower 1 cup cooked okra 1 cup avocado

Fruits
½ cup blackberries or raspberries
4 prunes (dried)
1 medium apple with skin
1 medium pear with skin

These foods provide at least 1-3 grams of fiber per serving.

Grains, Seeds, and Nuts
1 bagel (3.5-inch diameter)
1 slice whole wheat, pumpernickel, or rye bread
2-inch square cornbread
4 whole wheat crackers
1 bran, blueberry, cornmeal muffin
1 English muffin
1 cup popcorn (popped)
2 tablespoons of wheat germ
2 tablespoons almonds, peanuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, shredded coconut
Vegetables
½ cup bean sprouts (raw)
½ cup beets (diced, canned)
½ cup carrots
½ cup eggplant
½ cup squash or pumpkin (cooked)
½ cup tomatoes (canned)
Fruits
1 apple (3-inch diameter) or
½ cup applesauce
½ cup apricots (canned)
1 banana
½ cup cherries (canned or fresh)
½ cup cranberries (fresh)
3 dates
2 medium figs (fresh)
½ cup fruit cocktail (canned)
½ grapefruit
1 kiwi
1 orange (2½-inch diameter)
1 peach (fresh) or ½ cup peaches (canned)
1 pear (fresh) or ½ cup pears (canned)
1 plum (2-inch diameter)
¼ cup raisins
½ cup strawberries or blueberries(fresh)
1 tangerine