

## **GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CONSTIPATION**

- \* Increase fluids to at least six to eight glasses per day.
- \* Eat a diet high in fiber.
- \* Eat fresh fruits, fruit juices, and vegetables.
- \* Avoid pasta, pastries, cheese, rice, and foods with white sugar.
- \* Exercise regularly.
- \* Establish a regular time for defecation. (Best times for evacuations are usually after a meal.
- \* Drink warm prune juice or other warm beverages one hour before scheduled defecation time to stimulate urge.
- \* Use toilet or bedside commode instead of a bedpan if possible. (Ideal position is a modified squatting position with feet placed on a stool.)
- \* Relax by reading or listening to music in the bathroom.
- \* Allow sufficient time in the bathroom.
- \* Don't delay when you have the urge to evacuate.
- \* Avoid laxative and enema abuse.
- \* Take stool softeners, suppositories or laxatives as ordered. (Overuse of laxatives can cause constipation.)
- \* Use enemas or manual disimpaction for severe constipation.
- \* Report constipation that frequently reoccurs or that does not respond to treatment to physician.