

Constipation After Surgery

South Bay Plastic Surgeons | Torrance, CA

Constipation is a common side effect after surgery due to anesthesia, dehydration, and pain medications. To prevent constipation, follow the steps below in order. Start with **Step 1** and move down the list only if needed. All medications listed are available over the counter.

Step 1 – Hydration

Drink plenty of water. Sports drinks with electrolytes and low sugar are also acceptable. Hydration helps soften stool.

Step 2 – Natural Stimulants

Coffee or tea can stimulate bowel activity. It is safe to resume caffeinated beverages the day after surgery.

Step 3 – Fiber Supplements

Metamucil, FiberCon, Citrucel, or Benefiber. May begin 1-2 days before surgery if desired. Always take it with plenty of water.

Step 4 – Stool Softener

Colace (Docusate). Helps soften the stool and prevent straining. May begin 1-2 days before surgery if desired.

Step 5 – Osmotic Laxatives

Milk of Magnesia or MiralAX. These draw fluid into the intestines to help stimulate bowel movements.

Step 6 – Stimulant Laxative

Dulcolax (Bisacodyl). Stimulates intestinal muscles to help move stool if the previous steps are not effective.

Most patients find that hydration, fiber, and stool softeners are sufficient to prevent constipation. If symptoms persist despite these measures, you may move to the next steps in the list.

Questions or concerns? Call (310) 784-0644 | Text (888) 885-2127

