

Prevent bowel problems

By the time people reach their 40s, 50s, or 60s, people may experience some form of bowel problem, such as constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, or diverticulosis.

To prevent various kinds of bowel trouble, practice these healthful habits.

- Eat a diet high in fiber. Oat bran, wheat bran, beans, fruit, and vegetables are good sources of fiber. Increase fiber intake gradually.
- Avoid routine use of laxatives, since they disrupt the normal rhythm of the bowel. To ease elimination, take a high-fiber preparation like Metamucil instead.
- Drink at least six to eight 8-ounce glasses of water a day.
- Avoid straining when passing stool.

You should see your doctor if you notice blood in the stool, experience severe abdominal pain, pass pencil-thin stools, or note a significant change in your bowel habits.

