

## CONSTIPATION

### Decreased frequency and/or change to smaller/harder stools

Almost all people will have issues with constipation at some point, but patients in hospice are especially prone to developing severe constipation

### Causes



Decreased activity



Changes in diet with less fiber, less fluid



Medications - Very common cause

### Symptoms



Decreased frequency of stool, harder to pass



Abdominal discomfort/pain



Fullness sensation in rectum



In patients with Dementia, can present as increased agitation



Sometimes constipation can present as small liquid stools due to 'overflow' from a fecal impaction

## What to Do

- Increase fluids (if safe) and increase activity if able
  
- Laxatives have been provided by Hospice
  
- It is not necessary to have a bowel movement every day, but should not strain or be passing hard stools

## When to Call the **Hospice**

- No bowel movement for more than 2 days
  
- Increasing pain or discomfort
  
- Passage of blood in stool

- Increasing agitation

- **LAXATIVES SHOULD ALWAYS BE TAKEN IF USING OPIOID PAIN MEDICATIONS**  
(unless told otherwise by the Hospice Team)