

## **LAXATIVE PROTOCOL**

Patients who are regularly taking a narcotic pain medication (e.g. codeine, Tylox, Percocet, Oxycodone, MS Contin, etc.) may suffer from constipation. Your physician recommends a daily “bowel regimen” that you should follow just as carefully as your other medications. The overall goal is for you to have a bowel movement at least every two days. Because each patient and his/her response can vary, use the guidelines below to find a regimen that works best for you.

### **How to Use this Protocol**

Take the medications as specified below. Once you have had a bowel movement, use the PREVIOUS step as your daily laxative protocol. This regimen utilizes Senokot-S tablets, which contain a stool-softener (docusate sodium) and a laxative (senna). However, you may use Peri-Colace or generic equivalent. (Peri-Colace and Colace are not generic.)

- Take 2 Senokot-S tablets at bedtime. If you don't have a bowel movement by morning,
- Take 2 Senokot-S tablets after breakfast. If you don't have a bowel movement by evening,
- Take 3 Senokot-S tablets at bedtime. If you don't have a bowel movement by morning,
- Take 4 Senokot-S tablets after breakfast. If you don't have a bowel movement by evening,
- Take 2 tablespoons of Milk of Magnesia after breakfast and dinner as needed. Continue taking the Senokot-S tablets.
- If you don't have a bowel movement within 3 days (72 hours) of starting this protocol, notify your physician (863-603-6565). You may require a Dulcolax suppository or Fleet enema.

### **Ways to Manage Constipation**

- The best and easiest way to avoid becoming constipated:
  - Eat lots of fruits and vegetables.
  - Drink lots of water and fruit juices.
- Eat foods high in fiber such as prunes and grains.
- Avoid eating large amounts of cheese, cheese products, or bananas, which can be constipating.
- Stay physically active as much as possible.
- Keep track of your usual bowel movement schedule, and if your bowels have not moved in two days let your doctor or nurse know.
- If you still have problems with constipation, do not stop taking your pain medicine. Instead, contact your doctor for guidance on taking a laxative or stool softener.
- Do not use enemas or suppositories unless approved by your physician.

**Notify your Physician if**

- You develop significant abdominal pain.
- You notice blood in your stool or dark tarry stool.
- You develop uncontrollable diarrhea.
- The medication and diet prescribed to relieve your constipation is not effective
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