

Spinal Cord Injury: Constipation/Neurogenic Bowel and Bladder

Your food choices will be important for a healthy bowel and bladder routine. Increasing activity will also help avoid constipation (your therapist can assist you with a home exercise program).

Increase Your Fiber Intake: (Recommended daily fiber intake = 20-35 grams/day)

- Good sources of fiber are found in whole wheat, corn, bran, dried peas, nuts, most fruits and vegetables (especially those eaten with skins), oat bran, barley, dried beans and legumes.
- Passes through digestive tract unchanged, gives **bulk** to stools, helps maintain regularity.
- “**Bulky**” stools are helpful to a person with a SCI, as intestinal muscles may be weaker after injuries.
- Gives you a “feeling of fullness” to help with weight control.

Increase Your Fluids:

- Helps to keep stools soft.
- Aids in digestion and regular bowel movements.
- **Water** should be your #1 beverage choice.
- Drink 8-10 (8 ounces) cups of fluid a day (total 64-80 ounces per day).



Preventing Urinary Tract Infections (UTI's)

- Drinking large amounts of fluids every day may reduce UTI's.
- Limit carbonated beverages to 1 per day. Drinking carbonated beverages may cause an increase in UTI's.
- **Good Fluid Choices:** water, lemonade, decaffeinated tea, cranberry or apple juice.

For more information or to speak with a Registered Dietitian, call OSF Saint Francis Nutrition Access Line (309) 655-3705.