

1. What is constipation?

Constipation is not having a bowel movement (BM) as often as usual and/or having very hard stool.

2. What is a normal bowel pattern?

It is normal to have a BM anywhere between 3x/day to 3x/week. Stools should be soft, easy to pass, and not painful.

3. Why am I having constipation?

- Less activity (walking, etc) due to overall muscle weakness
- Weak and tired core muscles making it hard to push or bear down
- Too little fluid or fiber intake due to swallowing difficulties
- Response to pain medications (opioids), saliva-controlling medications, iron supplements, or others

4. The goal is to prevent constipation!

- Consume 6-8 glasses/day of non-caffeinated fluids (e.g. water, juice, soup, decaf tea/coffee)
- Increase fiber intake (must have enough fluid intake before increasing fiber!)
 - High fiber foods: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, seeds, flax, bran
 - Foods that are natural laxatives (“P” foods): prunes (or prune juice), pears, peaches, plums, papayas
 - Fiber supplements: Benefiber®, Metamucil®, Citrucil®
 - See fruit lax recipe below
- Consider high probiotic foods (e.g. yogurt, kefir, pickles, kimchi, sauerkraut, kombucha) or supplements
- Consider using a “squatty potty” if appropriate with positioning ability
- Make a bowel routine, such as going to the bathroom in the morning after eating

Fruit Lax Recipe	
1 cup prunes	1. Mix all ingredients. Soak overnight. 2. The next day, blend all in a blender. 3. Add to toast, oatmeal, ice cream, yogurt, smoothies. 4. Store in refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.
1 cup raisins	
1 cup dates	
1/2 cup orange juice	
2/3 cup prune juice	

5. I've done all the above, and I'm still constipated. Now what?

Laxatives may help. Senna is a laxative and must be taken daily to work best. See the table below. If you have a BM that is soft and comfortable to pass at least every 2–3 days, continue at the current step. If you start having diarrhea, stop laxatives and contact your ALS clinic.

Day	Step	# of Senna per Timing	Timing
Day 1	1	2 tablets (8.6 mg each)	Bedtime
Day 2			
Day 3	2	2 tablets (8.6 mg each)	Breakfast & Bedtime
If you are still constipated after Day 3, contact your clinic for more advice.			