

Supplement 1: Avoiding and managing constipation during a meal replacement diet

Symptoms of constipation may include the following

- Passing stools (faeces) less often than usual
- Hard, dry, lumpy stools that may be painful to pass
- Straining or discomfort when trying to pass a stool
- Having to sit on the toilet for longer than usual
- Bloating of the abdomen and/or abdominal pain

Take preventative steps to avoid constipation

- Make sure you consume two cups of non-starchy vegetables every day
- Drink at least 2 litres of water every day
- Be as physically active as possible
- Be aware of your normal bowel habits and take action as soon as possible if you notice you need to open your bowels less often or you develop constipation
- Speak to your healthcare professional if symptoms persist, if new symptoms develop, or if you have any concerns

Interventions for constipation

If the above preventative steps are not enough to restore normal bowel movements, laxatives may be needed. It is important while on a meal replacement diet to choose a laxative that does not contain added sugar or more than 4 grams of carbohydrate per serving (see examples below).

Example laxatives (always check with your healthcare professional before use)

- Benefiber® Original (based on wheat dextrin, a type of soluble fibre)
- Metamucil® Capsules (based on psyllium husk, a type of soluble fibre)
- Fybogel® (based on ispaghula husk, a type of soluble fibre)
- Movicol® Flavour Free powder (based on macrogol 3350)

Remember

It is important to be proactive about any symptoms experienced while on a meal replacement diet. Discuss any changes with a healthcare professional (eg, a dietitian, your doctor, or a pharmacist).

3-Year effect of weight loss via severe versus moderate energy restriction on body composition among postmenopausal women with obesity – the TEMPO Diet Trial
Radhika V Seimon, Anthony L Wild-Taylor, Sally McClintock, Claudia Harper, Alice A Gibson, Nathan A Johnson, Hamish A Fernando, Tania P Markovic, Jacqueline R Center, Janet Franklin, Peter Y Liu, Stuart M Grieve, Jim Lagopoulos, Ian D Caterson, Nuala M Byrne, Amanda Sainsbury
Heliyon 4 (2020) e04007 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04007>