If I don’t move my bowels daily, I take a laxative. Is this OK?

October 2, 2018 By Lucinda K. Porter RN

It depends on the laxative and how often you take it. Let’s start with some basic information. Normal bowel movement does not necessarily mean daily. Some people do go every day, but some have bowel movements every couple of days. Some go more than once daily.

Constipation is defined as three or fewer bowel movements in a week. If the stool is hard, dry and painful to pass, this is a sign of constipation. So, if you move your bowels easily but not every day, this may be normal for you.

Be sure you are getting plenty of water and dietary fiber, along with regular physical activity. If you need more help, there are many remedies for constipation, including fiber-based bulk-forming laxatives. Stool softeners and mild laxatives are relatively safe. If nothing works, stimulating laxatives such as Ex-Lax or Dulcolax are short terms remedies. Long-term laxative use is risky. Your doctor can guide you to the best choices for your situation.

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