

Post-Operative Bowel Regimen

Total Joint Replacement

Constipation is common after joint replacement, especially when opioid (narcotic) pain medication is used. This regimen is intended to help prevent constipation and keep bowel movements regular during your recovery.

Start 5 days before surgery

Begin MiraLAX® (polyethylene glycol) 2-5 days before your surgery. Take 1 scoop dissolved in 6 oz of water or juice twice daily.

Your Bowel Regimen

Before surgery

MiraLAX: 1 scoop in 6 oz of water or juice twice daily, beginning 2-5 days before surgery.

While taking opioids

Continue MiraLAX twice daily while taking narcotic/opioid pain medication.

If stools are loose

Decrease MiraLAX to once daily. Adjust based on stool softness.

Once regular again

After a bowel movement, resume MiraLAX 1-2 times daily as needed to maintain soft, regular stools.

If You Become Backed Up

- If you are unable to have a bowel movement and feel backed up, take 1 scoop of MiraLAX dissolved in 6 oz of water or juice every hour until you have a bowel movement.
- Once you have a bowel movement, return to MiraLAX 1-2 times daily, depending on how soft your stools are.

Important safety warning

Do NOT continue repeated hourly doses if you develop severe or worsening abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, significant abdominal swelling, or are unable to pass stool or gas. Contact your healthcare provider promptly.

Hydration & Activity

- Stay well hydrated. Drinking fluids throughout the day helps keep stools softer and can reduce constipation.
- Walk and remain as active as your postoperative instructions allow. Regular movement can help stimulate bowel function.

When to call

Contact your healthcare provider promptly for severe or worsening abdominal pain, persistent vomiting, significant abdominal swelling/distention, inability to pass stool or gas, or constipation that is not improving despite this regimen. Olympia Orthopaedic Associates: 360-570-3460, ext. 3860.