



Managing constipation when taking pain medicines

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Discipline of Public Health, The University of Adelaide
Repatriation General Hospital, Daw Park
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Australian Medicines Handbook
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About 3.2 million Australians have chronic pain. Opioid medicines may be used to manage moderate to severe pain.

A common side effect of opioid medicines is constipation. The right laxatives can help to manage constipation caused by these medicines.

What to do

- > Talk to your doctor to find out if you are taking an opioid medicine.
- > When starting an opioid medicine, talk to your doctor about how to prevent constipation.
- > If you are taking an opioid medicine and constipation is a problem:
 - ‡ Talk to your doctor about how to treat constipation and which laxative to use.
 - ‡ Some other medicines, including those you can buy over-the-counter, can also cause constipation (for example antacids). A review of your medicines can help to identify these.
 - ‡ A healthy diet with the right amount of fibre and fluids, daily exercise, and good toilet habits can also help.

