

Supported Self-Management

How to manage Bowel problems

This video will talk about the bowel problems you may experience after prostate cancer treatment.

Why might you get bowel problems?

Treatments can irritate the bowel and rectum (back passage) which can cause side effects. The side effects may start during or after your treatment. They usually settle down several weeks after your treatment. Some people experience no side effects at all.

What are the common bowel side effects?

Treatment may cause the lining of the bowel to become inflamed (proctitis) which then leads to symptoms such as:

- loose and watery bowel movements (diarrhoea)
- passing more wind than usual
- needing to go to the toilet more often, or having to rush to the toilet
- feeling an urge to have a bowel movement, but then not being able to
- a feeling that your bowels haven't emptied properly
- pain in the stomach area (abdomen) or back passage
- bleeding from the back passage – this is rare.

Management of bowel symptoms

Living with bowel problems can be distressing, and is not something people talk about easily. **Your healthcare team are available to discuss your problems and finding ways to deal with them.**

You may find it helpful to:

- **Plan ahead** and find out where toilets are before you go out, and carry absorbent pads.
- **A low fibre diet** for a short period can help settle diarrhoea
- **Anti-diarrhoeal drugs** can help with loose stools
- **Stool bulking medication** to increase stool bulk and regulate bowels
- **Buscopan** can help relieve bloating and distension
- **Proctosedyl suppositories** can ease rectal pain and reduce rectal spasm and discharge
- **Painkillers** can help control rectal or abdominal pain

It is important you speak to your healthcare for team for advice. They will be able to arrange prescriptions for you where appropriate.

Further Support

If you experience any bowel problems such as constipation, diarrhoea, or any blood in your stools please let your health care team know.

If you would like to discuss aspects of this video, please contact your healthcare team. Useful links can be found in your handbook.

Thank you