

BOWEL PROGRAMS

FOR INCONTINENCE, BRAIN AND SPINAL CORD INJURIES

Bowel routines are a daily part of life for everyone, though for those who have suffered a spinal cord injury, nerve damage, or brain injury can often result in bowel dysfunction and one's ability to control their bowel movements. Establishing a daily bowel program can be invaluable.

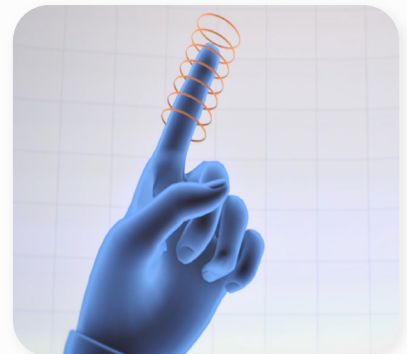


IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- It's recommended to consult with your health care provider and get a physical exam before starting any new bowel care or retraining program.
- There is no "one size fits all" bowel maintenance program that will work for everyone. The type of disease or nerve damage should be accounted for as well as other factors ranging from one's previous bowel movement history to diet, activity levels, and stress.

STEP 1 - PREPARING FOR BOWEL MOVEMENT

- Provide privacy, explain what you are doing, and apply gloves.
- There are a lot of factors that contribute to a successful bowel care program, including having all the right medical and cleaning tools well stocked and close at hand.
- Check your inventory regularly to ensure you have adequate supplies of: gloves, lubricant, wipes, suppositories, laxatives, or mini-enemas, and plastic trash bags
- Have the individual lay on their left side or assist them on to their commode for best results.
- Insert a lubricated finger into the rectum and relax the sphincter muscle with a gentle circular motion.
- Once stimulated, the person should sit in a normal position, either on the toilet or, if confined to a bed, using a bedpan or disposable pad or diaper.
- If they are unable to sit up, have them continue to lie on their left side, or continue to sit on their commode.
- If they still haven't had a bowel movement after 20 minutes, repeat the stimulation.
- In addition to digital stimulation, medical remedies such as enemas, stool softeners, or laxatives can be used to help trigger bowel movements when experiencing difficulty. Please consult with a health care provider before trying any of these methods.



STEP 2 - POST BOWEL MOVEMENT CARE

- Clean them well to prevent a skin injury, dispose of the disposable pad or diaper, if one was used, in a trash bag to immediately take to the trash, preferably outside.
- If they used the commode, empty the container into the toilet, flush the toilet, and provide detailed cleaning.
- Remove gloves and wash hands. Apply new gloves to assist with dressing or any other needs.



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