

Supplements for Avoiding Constipation

<i>What is it?</i>	<i>Examples</i>	<i>How does it work?</i>	<i>When should I use it?</i>
Fiber	Leafy vegetables, beans, fruits, fiber supplements	This bulks the stool, causing it to be larger and softer. This makes it easier to pass.	Daily. One should get 25-30 g per day through diet and/or supplementation.
Stool Softeners/Osmotic Laxatives	Docusate-containing supplements (like Surfak and Colace), Polyethylene glycol-containing supplements (like Miralax)	These draw water into the stool, causing them to be softer, looser, and able to be pushed along easier.	Daily, if constipation is not managed with fiber. These are safe to use long term.
Stimulant Laxatives	Dulcolax, Milk of Magnesia	These stimulate the bowels, causing them to contract and move stool along.	Sometimes. These should be used in more severe cases of constipation, not as a daily supplementation. Expect
Suppositories	Bisacodyl suppository	These are placed into the anus, allowing the stimulant medication to work faster.	Sometimes. These should be used in cases of hard, painful stools.
Senna (AVOID THIS)	Found in "natural" products, "smooth move" teas, or in combination with other laxatives	This works as a stimulant laxative, however causes long term bowel damage.	Sometimes, but only for 1-2 weeks, maximum. Check all laxative ingredient lists to avoid this.

Common constipating foods:

bananas, white bread, white rice, red meat, potatoes, fried/greasy foods