

# Advice on Fecal Incontinence

## What is Fecal Incontinence?



- Fecal incontinence is an inability to control bowel movements, leading to leakage of stool or gas.
- Some people with fecal incontinence feel the urge to have bowel movements but are unable to wait to reach the toilet. Other people don't feel the sensation of a pending bowel movement, passing stool unknowingly.
- It makes people avoid social activities for fear of embarrassment.

## How to Improve Fecal Incontinence?

### 1. Diet Modification :

- ✓ Increase dietary fibre intake daily such as vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. It helps to bulk up the stool and reduce the frequency of fecal incontinence.
- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids, e.g. 6 - 8 glasses of water daily. Reduce coffee, cola drinks, Chinese tea or alcohol.
- ✓ Eat smaller meals more frequently.
- ✓ Eat and drinks at different times.

### Foods to take:

#### Soluble Fibre

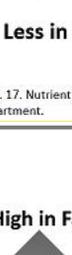
- Increase the absorption of water to form a gel-like stool
- Slow down the speed through the bowel, help to improve diarrhoea



### Foods to avoid:

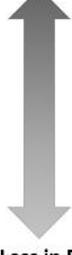
- Greasy, high-fat foods may provoke symptoms of abdominal cramps and diarrhoea
- The dietary reference intake for fat in men is 67g per day (13 teaspoon of oil) and 50g per day in women (10 teaspoon of oil )

**Chinese Dim Sum**

 Each steamed beancurd sheet roll = 2.5 x	 Each steamed minced beef ball = 1.5 x	 "Mai-lai" cake = 2 x	 Steamed pork ribs = 3.5 x	 Steamed rice with pork rib & chicken leg = 5 x	<b>High in Fat</b>  <b>Less in Fat</b> 
 Each steamed rice-roll with shrimps = 0.3 x	 Each steamed shrimp dumplings = 0.4 x	 Each steamed chicken bun = 0.6 x	 Boiled vegetables with sweetened soy sauce = 1 x	 Steamed rice with chicken & winter mushroom = 3.5 x	

Source: Food and Environment Hygiene Department. Risk assessment studies report No. 17. Nutrient values of Chinese Dim Sum. (2007). Hong Kong: Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

**Foods in Cha Chaan Teng**

 Baked pork chop rice = 16.5 x	 Stir-fried beef rice noodles = 16.5 x	 HK-style western fried rice = 9.5 x	 French toast = 8 x	 Deep-fried chicken wing = 2.5 x	<b>High in Fat</b>  <b>Less in Fat</b> 
 Plain chicken (removed skin) rice = 2.5 x	 Steamed fish with rice = 4.4 x	 Winter melon with assorted meat soup = 4.2 x	 Shredded pork with salted vegetables rice noodle soup = 1.5 x	 Marinated chicken wing = 2 x	

Source: Centre for Food Safety, Hong Kong

### Foods to avoid:

- Spicy food
- Dairy products e.g. milk, cheese & ice cream
- Products with artificial sweeteners e.g. gum with xylitol
- Gas-prone foods: beans, onions, sweet potatoes, green peppers, asparagus, nuts, soda drinks



### 2. Schedule the time for bowel movement:

- ✓ Bowel training needs to be performed at a specific time every day
- ✓ Choose the most suitable and relax time
- ✓ 20-30 minutes after meal

### 3. Toilet positioning:

- ✓ Don't sit on the toilet for too long
- ✓ The squatting position can completely relax the pelvic floor muscles and help to straighten the rectum for better bowel emptying



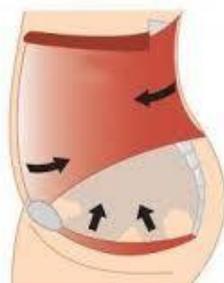
## Food & bowel diary

Keeping a food and bowel diary may help to identify certain foods or situations that may trigger the accidents.

- **When** does the fecal incontinence happen ?
- **Which food** will induce serious fecal incontinence ?

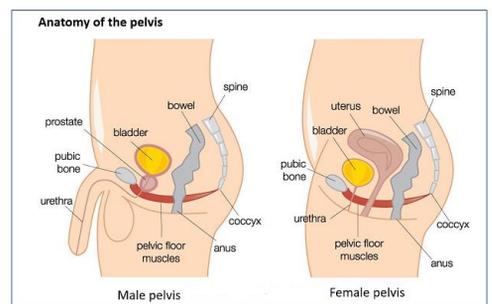
## Pelvic floor muscle exercise

- These exercises can be performed in the standing, sitting or lying position.
- Squeeze and draw in the muscles around the anus. Lift them UP inside. You should have a sense of “lift” each time when you squeeze your pelvic floor muscles. Try to hold them strong and tight as you count to 10. Now, let them go and relax. You should have a distinct feeling of “letting go”. If you can't hold for 10, just hold for as long as you can.
- Repeat “squeeze & lift” and let go. It is best to rest for 10 seconds in between each lift up of the muscles.
- Squeeze & lift the muscles for 5 – 10 seconds and then let go for 10 seconds, repeat 10 times. Try to do three sets each day.



### While doing pelvic floor muscle training

- Remember lift, tighten and relax
- Do not hold the breath
- Do not tighten your abdomen and buttocks
- Keep your thighs relaxed
- Please do not be discouraged, some patients need to do 2 to 6 months of exercise to achieve results



## Medication

- Use moisture-barrier cream to protect your skin around anus.
- Fibre supplement (e.g. Metamucil) or antidiarrheal drugs (e.g. Loperamide) may be prescribed to bulk up the stool and slow down large intestine movement.
- If fecal incontinence occurs due to incomplete emptying, suppositories or enema may be helpful. Please seek your medical advice.

