



## SICKLE CELL CLINIC

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### Constipation

#### What is constipation?

Constipation occurs when you are having difficulty with your bowel movements or it hurts to have a bowel movement. It often happens when your poop gets dry and hard.

#### What causes constipation?

- Constipation occurs if somebody is not drinking enough water, not being active, or not eating enough fiber, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- In sickle cell disease, some patients may take pain medications called opioids. These medications improve your pain but also cause constipation.

#### How can I prevent constipation?

- We recommend that as soon as you start an opioid for a pain crisis, you also begin to take a medication to prevent constipation (stool softener). This is very important, as some patients with constipation develop severe abdominal pain.
- We also recommend you drink lots of fluids.
- Eat foods with fiber including fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain cereals and breads.
- Be physically active.