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BOWEL MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTIONS

Unfortunately, the Western diet contains very little fibre essential to bowel health. In addition, many of us have developed toileting habits that predispose us to haemorrhoids, diverticular disease and other bowel/anorectal conditions. Raymond has gone through some of these instructions with you today.

Diet

- Eat as much fibre as possible including whole grain breads, cereals and oats. Except for prunes, fruit and vegetables do not have much fibre, hence why you should take the fibre supplement.
- Drink at least 6-8 glasses of water and juice each day.

Supplements – no prescription needed

- **Fibre supplements** – Take 1 teaspoon of a powdered fibre supplement (eg. Metamucil) mixed in a glass of water or juice once in the morning. You can increase to twice a day if you are constipated.
- Benefiber powder/tablets or psyllium husk can also be used as it is similar.
- Fibre supplementation will **not** give you diarrhoea. The most common complaint is a feeling of bloating/gas.
- **Stool softeners** – If required, take some Movicol if your stools are still hard. If this is needed, take a Movicol sachet, 1-2x a day. You may increase this up to two sachets, twice a day if you are constipated or straining.
- Coloxyl (NO SENNA) 1-2 tablets, 1-2 times a day can be used as well.

Toileting Habits

- Avoid spending longer than 3-5 minutes on the toilet. The act of sitting over a hole creates more pressure on your anal region, and this predisposes you to conditions such as haemorrhoids. If you need to sit on the toilet for other reasons, sit on the lid i.e. like a normal chair.
- Avoid straining or pushing your stool. Again, this increases the pressure on the anal region.
- Try not to become constipated or to have hard stools – follow the diet and supplements advice.
- Avoid toilet paper as this is like sandpaper to your rear end! If possible, clean the area only with water. A bidet can help with this. When outside of your home, use unscented baby wipes. Do not use lotions, soaps or creams unless directed as these can irritate your anus.
- When not at home, use baby wet wipes that only have water in them (no scents, creams or additives). These soft wipes should not harm the area.

Other therapies

- **Sitz baths** should be taken 3-4 times per day initially, especially after each bowel motion. Fill the tub with a few inches of lukewarm water and let your bottom bathe in this for 5-10 minutes. This will help with any pain you might have. Do not add any lotions or additives to the water.