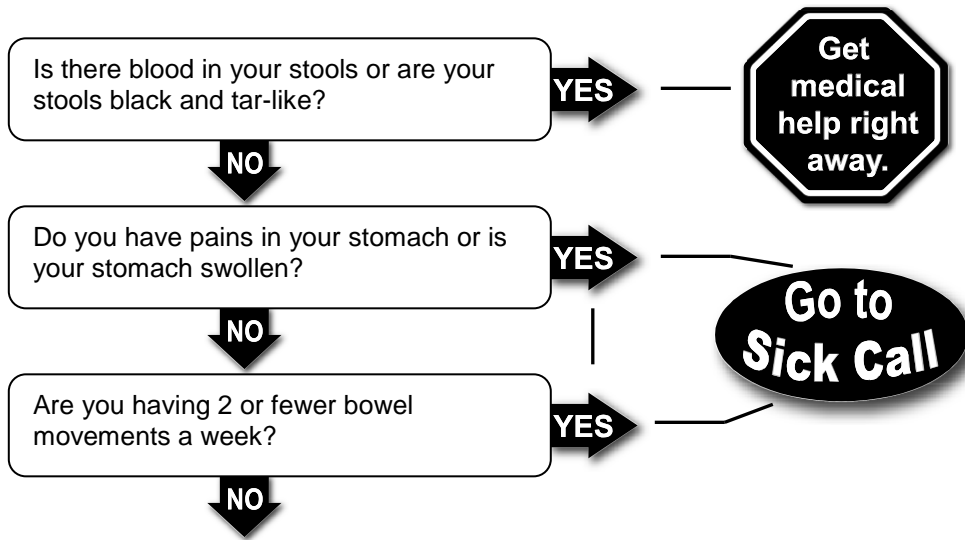


These instructions are to be used as part of the Self-care Program. The following diagram can help you decide if your ailment is minor enough to be treated with Self-care measures without seeing a healthcare provider. This information is not for clinical use.

1. Start at the top of the diagram.
2. Answer each symptom evaluation question in order by following the appropriate YES or NO arrow.
3. If you answer NO to all questions it is probably appropriate for you to use self-care measures.
4. You are the best judge of your own health. If you are having trouble performing your duties or have a symptom that is not listed, see a healthcare provider.

Self-care Instructions for Constipation

There is no “correct” number of bowel movements to have per day or per week. Everyone is different and you shouldn’t worry about the number of bowel movements you have per week. However, you may have constipation if your stools are hard, difficult, or uncomfortable to pass. If you think you have constipation, use this symptom evaluation chart.



Use self-care measures:

- Drink plenty of water. Water gets absorbed into your stools and helps them to pass easier.
- Eat plenty of high fiber foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grain breads, and bran cereals (e.g., Bran Flakes, Raisin Bran, and Shredded Wheat). Dietary fiber helps stools to pass easier. Increase the amount of fiber gradually over several days to avoid gas and bloating.
- Exercise also helps to get things moving.
- A laxative can be used once to get things moving but don’t use laxatives again and again. Your body can become used to them and make the problem worse. Use laxatives as directed.

Go to sick call if your bowel movements are more than 4 days apart. Follow the chart if you get any of the symptoms listed.