

# When the going gets hard

Suggestions for dietary intervention  
when the bowels stop moving

from Valley Flaxflour

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There are occasions when the bowels just refuse to cooperate with the mind's wishes. Two, three or even four days after the last bowel movement, the dietary staff may find out that one of the residents has been having difficulty with bowel movements or has not had a movement for several days.

Following are several solutions which dietary staff can offer to help the nursing staff resolve the constipation and bring the resident back to regularity.

- ❖ Stewed prunes are often the food of choice for senior residents. Five or six prunes should be heated in water to stew them and then cooled before serving. These should be offered 3 to 5 times throughout the day until the bowels move.
- ❖ Prune juice is generally not useful for resolving constipation.
- ❖ Some types of fruit are very effective laxatives. Your resident may have a favourite, and may include grapes, bananas, dates, prunes. They may respond to additional vegetable oil in the diet or whole flax seed jell. So be sure to bring the resident in on any possible solution.
- ❖ Ensure that the resident is receiving adequate fluid.
- ❖ If exercise is possible, ensure that the resident is moving. Even getting up to sit at a table for a meal can be enough to help stimulate peristaltic activity.

**PRUNE PUREE**

Yield 2 cups

Serve 2 to 3 Tbsp.

2/3 c	flax flour
1/2 c	water
1/2 c	prune juice or substitute apple or other fruit juice
1/3 c	puréed prunes

Combine all ingredients. Mix to blend. Refrigerate.

This puréed mixture can be served by placing a scoop of it in a bowl and topping it with hot cereal, blending it into the cereal, or providing it directly from a spoon or med cup.

**Offer 3 to 5 times throughout the day until the bowels move.**

**FRUIT LAX**

Yield 2 ½ cups (10 x ¼ cup servings)

fruit juice or water	500 ml	2 cups
prunes, pitted	20	
Valley Flax Flour	170 ml	2/3 cup

In a blender, purée all ingredients together until smooth. Refrigerate. Very tasty as is or stir in ¼ cup of this thick puree into hot cereal, apple sauce, yogurt or pudding.

**Offer 3 to 5 times throughout the day until the bowels move.**

**PRUNE SMOOTHIE**

Yield: 1 L or 8 X 125 ml (½ cup) servings

Pitted prunes	35	150 ml prune purée (approximately 375 g or 1 retail package)
Apple juice	875 ml	3 1/2 cups
Flax flour	185 ml	3/4 cup

1. Place the pitted prunes in the blender.
2. Pour in 1 cup of the apple juice and process until very smooth.
3. Add another cup of the apple juice and continue to process for about 1 minute.
4. Add the flax flour and the remaining apple juice. Process to blend.

Refrigerate to store. Label “do not dilute”. If diluting is required to increase the acceptability, measure 125 ml (1/2 cup) of the smoothie mixture into a glass and then dilute to the desired consistency with additional fruit juice.

Shake before serving. Offer with a large milkshake straw.

**Offer 3 to 5 times throughout the day until the bowels move.**

## FRUIT SMOOTHIE

Yield: 1 – 2 servings

Offer flax flour as a **nutritional enhancement** in **smoothies**.

Simply add 1 to 2 Tbsp of flax flour to the smoothie and blend, or use the following recipe.

Multiply the smaller quantity by the number of residents you are preparing Smoothies for.

Fresh or frozen fruit	enough for one or two people (banana, apple, orange, kiwi, pineapple or other available fruit)
Fruit juice	60 to 125 ml      1/4 to 1/2 cup
Yogurt or Tofu (optional)	60 to 125 ml      1/4 to 1/2 cup
Flax flour	60 to 90 ml      4 to 6 Tbsp
Ice (optional)	

1. In a blender, combine the washed or peeled fruit with the fruit juice, yogurt or tofu, and flax flour. Add ice, as desired.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Thin with additional juice, as required.

Naturally loaded with vitamins and minerals, the addition of flax flour to your smoothie enhances the fibre, omega-3 oil, protein, and anti-oxidant content of this increasingly popular beverage.

Serve with a large milkshake straw.