



## Why is good digestion important?

Nelson is an Elder who is having on-going issue with hard stools and constipation. Nelson decides to make an appointment with his provider to talk about his constipation and overall health. His provider referred him to a dietitian for nutrition education on ways to treat constipation and prevent this issue in the future. He learned about increasing fiber and fluids in his diet and worked on this for several weeks. On his follow up appointment, Nelson was happy to report he is feeling better and having more frequent, soft stools now.

## What can you look for?

- Hard stool
- Long time in between bowel movements
- Acid reflux or heart burn
- Feeling bloated
- Upset stomach

Your digestive system works hard every day to digest the food you eat. After years of this, you may start to see some changes in your digestive health.

## Questions to ask yourself:

- Are you having hard stools?
- Is there a long time in between bowel movements?
- Are you struggling with acid reflux or heart burn?
- Are you taking multiple medications which may affect your digestive tract?





## What can you do?

- Maintain a healthy diet
- Drink enough water
- Be physically active
- Avoid foods that trigger heart burn or acid reflux (citrus, tomato products, caffeine, carbonated drinks)
- Consider taking a probiotic
- Check your medications for common side effects such as nausea and constipation

## Where can you find support?

- Your **Primary Care Team** can talk with you about changes or concerns with your digestion.
- **Registered Dietitian** can assist with talking about concerns with digestion and provide education and treatment options.
- **Wellness Center** and **Exercise Team** can assist with being physically active.

For more information, visit <https://www.southcentralfoundation.com/aging-well/>

## Alaska Native Health Campus Resources

### Anchorage

(907) 729-3300

### Matanuska-Susitna Borough

(907) 631-7880

- Exercise
- Primary Care
  - Integrated Pharmacist
  - Registered Dietitian
- Wellness Center

