ALL narcotic pain medicines cause constipation. For a short time after surgery, you are going to need narcotic pain medications. Getting severely constipated (“Bricks” in your bowels) is miserable and passing those “Geologic Objects” is just not much fun. So…you need to learn how to prevent and treat constipation before it becomes a problem.

Find a Bowel Program NOW that works for you.
Everyone’s bowels are different, so there is no universal constipation program that works for everybody.
If you already know what works for you, just do it and ignore the rest of this!
If not, while trialing narcotic pain medications for after your surgery; find out what keeps your bowels from getting stopped up.

Your goal
Have a bowel movement every day while you are on narcotic pain medications.
If your bowels are a little too loose with my trial bowel program, you can back off more easily than taking care of severe constipation!

When to use your Bowel Program?
While you are trialing narcotic pain medications.
Start your bowel program 3 days before surgery and continue with it until you discontinue the narcotic pain medications after surgery.

Starter Bowel Program - Give this a try and then modify it to your individual needs.
• Drink five to eight 8-ounce glasses of water/fluid each day.
• Eat foods high in fiber or roughage. At least 3 servings of uncooked fruits or raw vegetables every day including raisins, prunes, apricots, peaches, grapes, melons, pears or your favorite vegetables.
• Use Colace (Docusate Sodium, a stool softener, 100 mg) by mouth twice a day.
• Use Miralax (17 gm. = 1 Tablespoon = 1 packet) in 8 ounces of water by mouth twice a day.
• If you don’t move your bowels everyday add MOM (Milk of Magnesia) 1-2 ounces in 6 ounces of prune juice twice a day (called a Brown Cow).
• Add other laxatives, suppositories or enemas as you find works for you.

Examples of other medications you can add to your Bowel Program

Stool softeners and laxatives - Take by mouth.
• Stool softeners – Docusate Sodium (Colace, Dialose, DSS, and Surfak)
• Natural laxatives - Prune Juice, Apple Cider (not juice), Smooth Move Tea. Onset 6-8 hr.
• Irritant laxatives – Dulcolax, Ex-Lax, Milk of Magnesia, Senakot. Onset 6-8 hr. Habit forming.
• Make Your Own - Add 1-2 ounce(s) of milk of magnesia mixed with 6 ounces of warm prune juice (drink quickly right before bedtime). Onset 6 to 8 hr
• Other Laxatives –Magnesium Citrate and Mineral Oil. Not indicated for repeated use because of risk aspiration, vitamin and electrolyte problems in seniors.
**Bulk laxatives and fiber** - Take by mouth.
- Metamucil®, Citrucel, FiberCon and Miralax mixed in 8 ounces of water/prune juice/apple cider.

Warning: Bulk laxatives and fiber absorb water and expand to increase bulk and moisture in the stool. They should only be used if you are able to drink plenty of fluids throughout the day. If you don't drink enough fluids, your stool will become harder, not softer.

**Suppositories and enemas** - Take by rectum. Habit Forming.
- *Suppositories* – Dulcolax or other. Onset 60 min
- *Enema* – Fleet’s or other. Onset 15 to 30 min
- *Make Your Own Enema* - a "Black and White". Mix 1-cup molasses with 1 pint half and half. Warm to body temperature. Use as an enema. Onset 15 to 30 min

Both can be used as an added step to treat constipation. It is not a good idea to rely on enemas as part of a regular plan to avoid constipation.