As tempting as it can seem to turn to a laxative or enema when things are going in a harder solid way, it is not necessarily the right direction to turn to. If times are troubled in the intestines talk to your health care provider first, in the same way narcotics are addictive, your bowels can also become addicted and dependent on laxatives. And worst of all if you are having a sudden (acute) diverticulitis attack, laxatives or enemas can actually make the pain worse, the laxatives actually make your bowel muscles contract more.

General rules of thumb for a healthy bowel.

- Drink 1½ to 2 quarts of water every day.
- Try to stay on a HIGH fiber diet at all times.
- Use stool softeners only until you get your high fiber diet back on track.
- Try to not strain when having a bowel movement, read a book and relax.
- Get regular exercise daily if possible.
- **If you are having a diverticulitis attack, you need antibiotics for treatments, not laxatives.**
- Consult your doctor before taking any laxatives.

So while we face the reality that following all the rules of thumb on a daily basis is sometimes impossible with our hectic daily lives we accept the fact that Mother Nature will need a little help in keeping our colons clean and clear.

Fiber supplements, especially psyllium seed or wheat bran products like the ones listed below often help with constipation and regularity. You may however need to try several types to find one that works best for you, various types of fibers can have different effects on your large intestine. Although these products cost more than increasing fiber naturally through your diet, for some who can’t keep up on the higher fiber (35mg a day) the cost may far outweigh the suffering.

Remember only you can keep your body going in a healthy direction, don’t be lazy and listen to what it is telling you at all time. Before trying any products keep in good communication with your doctors and discuss which supplements will best help you.