

AS Facer (Longton) Ltd
66 Liverpool Road
Longton
Preston PR4 5PB
Tel: 01772 613 286



Constipation

Definition

Constipation is a condition which involves difficulty in passing stools or the infrequent passage of hard, dry stools.

Description

Proper elimination is important as the bowel is a source of many toxins. The waste matter can accumulate in the bowel and become dry and moving of the bowels becomes harder and harder. Other symptoms can accompany Constipation. These include bloating, nausea, indigestion, bad breath, haemorrhoids, headaches, skin problems, flatulence and intestinal disease (e.g., diverticulitis, bowel cancer). A healthy colon should eliminate waste in 6 to 18 hours. However, the frequency of bowel movements varies greatly between individuals and it is hard to determine what is normal.

Cause

Constipation can be caused by:

- Improper diet. A highly refined and processed, high sugar, high fat, low-fibre and low fluid diet causes constipation.
- Physical inactivity (inadequate exercise, prolonged bed rest).
- Pregnancy.
- Certain drugs and medications (opiate analgesics, the pill, antidepressants, iron pills, antacids, diuretics and antibiotics).
- Bowel disease (diverticulitis, irritable bowel syndrome, tumour).
- Nervous disorders.
- Food allergies.
- Long term use of laxatives.
- Intestinal parasites.

Treatment options

As with all conditions your Doctor should be consulted to diagnose and treat this condition. Ask your Doctor about the latest advice on this ailment. See your Doctor for a medical examination. If the all clear is given, dietary habits may need changing. Increase fluids as much as possible. Do not ignore or suppress the urge to move the bowels.

Suggested solutions

General

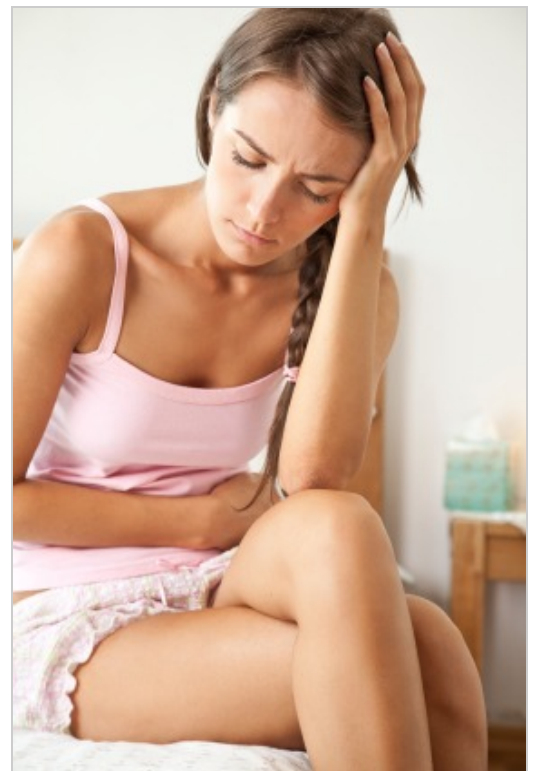
- » Laxative
- » Acidophilus

Natural

- » Fibre supplement

Diet

- » High fibre



Constipation is usually relieved by increasing the intake of dietary fibre. Laxatives should generally be avoided except where straining will make worse a condition already present (such as angina) or increase the risk of rectal bleeding as in haemorrhoids. Laxatives may be useful in drug-induced Constipation.

Diet hints

- Changing to a high fibre diet is the primary health management strategy for Constipation. Increasing consumption of water is important when adding fiber to the diet. Drink at least 8 to 10 glasses of water daily.
- Increase water-soluble fibres. These include fresh, raw fruits and vegetables, wholemeal and wholegrain bread and cereals, apples, pears, psyllium, legumes (baked beans, 3 bean mix etc.)
- The diet should be low in fats which slow the passage of food through your digestive system, low in refined and processed foods. Try to change packaged foods to whole natural foods.
- Caffeine causes dehydration.
- Take time to eat slowly and chew food well.
- Include foods that have natural laxative properties such as figs, prunes, apricots and rhubarb.
- Linseed oil taken daily may help the passing of waste through the bowel. One teaspoon twice daily is recommended.
- papayas and lemons have a stimulating effect on the bowel.

Vitamins/minerals/herbs

- Acidophilus can aid with digestion and elimination.
- Flaxseed Oil can lubricate the colon and make an easier passage for bowel movements.
- Cascara is a herb which can be beneficial in the treatment of constipation due to its stimulating laxative action. This herb should only be taken short term and not be used as a long-term solution.
- Aloe vera is thought to be a stimulating laxative which has an anti-inflammatory action and can encourage soft stools.
- Magnesium may assist relief of constipation as it can improve gut motility and retain water in the colon.
- Psyllium is a bulk forming laxative which can be useful in treating constipation. NOTE- Psyllium fibre should always be taken with a large glass of water.

Pharmacist's advice

Ask your Pharmacist for advice.

- 1) Follow the Diet Hints.
- 2) First thing in the morning, drink a glass of warm water with a little lemon juice added.
- 3) Avoid stress in your daily life as much as possible because this may lead to Constipation. It is known that for some people the bowel action can easily be upset if the people are not relaxed.
- 4) Have regular exercise and maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- 5) Try to develop a regular time pattern when using the toilet.
- 6) Your Pharmacist may suggest a suitable laxative if it is needed. Remember that over use and reliance on commercial laxatives may cause a 'lazy' bowel. This can make the Constipation worse in the long run. Products which may be inserted anally to help relieve Constipation include glycerin suppositories. Ask your Pharmacist for advice.
- 7) Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water (filtered) a day as water helps with elimination of waste matter. Filtered water has less bacteria than tap water.
- 8) To help in cases of Constipation sugar-free fibre supplements are available which form bulk in the digestive system.

9) If the diet is inadequate, consider some nutritional supplements. These include vitamin C, B group vitamins, vitamin A, vitamin D and acidophilus to help the digestive system.

DISCLAIMER : This information is an educational aid only. It is not intended to replace medical advice for individual conditions or treatments. Talk to your doctor, pharmacist, nurse or naturopath before following any medical regimen to see whether it is safe and effective for you.