

lifelax

constipation

*diet and lifestyle in the
management of constipation*



This leaflet is to tell you about:



Fibre



Fruit and Vegetables



Fluid



Activity



Toileting



Medication/Laxatives

And how these may help
relieve your constipation.

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constipation

Nearly everyone becomes constipated at some point. This information is to tell you a bit more about constipation and what you can do to help relieve it.

what is a normal bowel habit?

Individuals vary in how often they open their bowels – it ranges between three times a day and three times a week. So don't be anxious if you don't pass a daily stool. A stool should be solid and easy to pass.

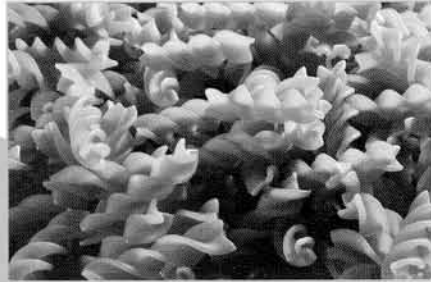
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what is constipation?

Constipation is a symptom not a disease; it may result in one or more of the following:

- Stools become hard, difficult or painful to pass.
- Your frequency of toilet trips decreases.
- You get cramp like pains in your lower abdomen.



what causes constipation?

Diet – not eating enough fibre (fruit, vegetables, cereals).

Not drinking enough – ensure you have a variety of fluids throughout the day rather than just strong tea or coffee.

Bad bowel habits – ignoring the urge to go to the toilet may result in the stool drying out, becoming hard and more difficult to pass.

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Medicines – some medication can cause constipation. Speak with your doctor if you suspect this.

Regular use of stimulant laxatives – these can make the bowel 'lazy' and begins a vicious cycle.



medicines which may cause constipation:

- Antacids containing aluminium or magnesium.
- Some pain killers e.g. codeine.
- Iron tablets.
- Some anti-depressants.
- There are other medications which may cause constipation check with your doctor.

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Your constipation can be made worse by:

- Dehydration.
- Inactivity.
- Emotional upset.
- Painful anal conditions e.g. piles.
- Poor toilet facilities.



how can you ease your constipation?

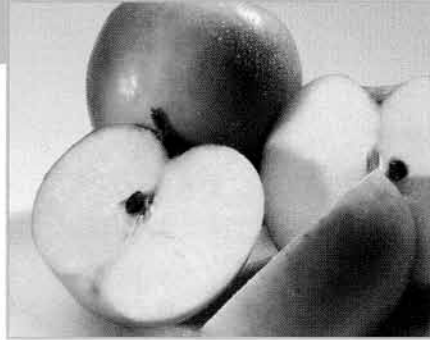
Try some of these ideas before using laxatives:

- Eat **regularly**.
- Eat more **fibre**.
- **Fruit**: dried, fresh, tinned (in own juice) and fruit juice.
- **Vegetables**: fresh, frozen and tinned.
- If you have problems chewing try chopping or pureeing fruit and vegetables.

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- **Cereals:** Choose a brand containing wheat, bran or oats e.g. Bran Flakes, Fruit and Fibre, Weetabix, Porridge, All Bran, instead of Cornflakes or sugar coated cereals.
- If cereals are difficult to chew, try soaking overnight in milk.
- **Wholemeal bread.**
- **Drink lots: 8 to 10 cups** per day of water/ juice/ soft drink but avoid too much strong tea, coffee or alcohol.
- **Exercise regularly** – keeping active helps your bowels to keep active, even if you have a disability.
- **Routine** – go to the toilet as part of a routine e.g. as soon as you are up or after breakfast.



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Goals

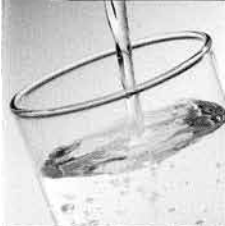
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Toileting – listen to your body when you feel like going to the toilet and take time going.

- Sit in a relaxed, comfortable position on the toilet.
- You may find it helpful to sit with your legs slightly apart and to lean forward.
- Most importantly, relax and take your time.



If you still have concerns about your constipation and it is not responding to simple treatments please see your doctor (especially if there is rectal bleeding or new symptoms like pain or distension).

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