

lifelax

activity and
constipation

*diet and lifestyle in the
management of constipation*



why is being active important for you?

- Being active helps prevent constipation because it stimulates bowel movement.
- It can also have other health benefits such as managing back pain and lowering blood pressure.
- Being active can help you stay mentally and physically fit in old age.



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what sort of activity should you do?

- Any type of activity is suitable as long as you enjoy it.
- You may experience a few aches when starting exercise. This is normal. However persistent or severe pain should always be investigated by a doctor.
- You should attempt to do moderate exercise which means moving about enough to make you feel warm and slightly out of breath.



- This may be part of your usual routine such as walking to the shops, gardening or housework.
- It may be something you do as a hobby such as swimming or playing bowls.
- If you are not able to exercise, try being seated and doing stationary exercises.
- Remember do a warm up before exercising and then do some simple stretches after exercising.



how much activity should you do?

- Try to gradually work up to doing 30 minutes of activity a day.
- You could do short bouts of activity e.g. 2 sessions of 15 minutes.
- Walking within 30 minutes after you have eaten can help constipation.

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how much exercise do YOU do?

Use the table below to fill in how often you exercise in a usual week.

| | Never (0) | 1 time a wk (1) | 2-3 times a wk (2.5) | 4-6 times a wk (5) | Once a day (7) | More than once a day (10) | Score |
|--|--------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Vigorous exercise lasting 30 mins or more? | | | | | | | x 5 |
| Moderate exercise lasting 30 mins or more? | | | | | | | x 3 |

Vigorous exercise makes you breathe harder or puff and pant, e.g. jogging, squash, vigorous swimming etc.

Moderate exercise does not make you breathe, puff or pant too hard, e.g. walking, gardening, bowling etc.

A score of 15 is equivalent to moderate daily activity (recommended amount of exercise).

some exercise tips

- If you sit down a lot, get up whenever you can and walk around.
- If you can manage, take the stairs instead of the lift.
- Put more effort into physical activities you do.
- If you use the bus get off a stop earlier and walk the rest.
- If you can, walk or cycle short journeys instead of using the car/bus.
- Check out different activities.
- Try and push yourself a little further each time but don't overdo it!
- Exercising with a friend will help you keep up your routine and make it more fun for you.



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wake up with a stretch

Sit in bed and reach your arms to the ceiling while inhaling. Exhale when lowering.

Stand up straight and reach your right arm up to the ceiling and stretch. Do the same with your left.

Reach both arms to the ceiling, cross them over and intertwine your hands making sure your palms are facing each other. Stretch upwards.



Stand straight and lift your shoulders up to your ears, roll them backwards or forwards then drop them down. Repeat this five times.

Sit on the edge of your bed, lift your leg and start rotating your foot one way then the other for a few minutes. Repeat with the other leg then your hands.

From standing, lower yourself so you sit on your ankles with knees bent for 2-3 minutes.

Remember you can help your constipation by:

- Being more active: remember to drink more.
- Drinking plenty of fluid: about 8-10 cups per day – try soft drinks and not too much strong tea or coffee.
- Eating more fibre rich foods such as wholegrain breads, cereals and porridge: remember to drink plenty.



- Eating more fruit and vegetables.
- Listening to your body: go to the toilet when it tells you to and leave enough time for toileting.

You may find you have some bloating and wind at first – but as your bowel becomes used to the extra fibre this will settle down.

If you have any existing medical condition or have any concerns about your health, please contact your GP prior to starting exercise.

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NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE



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University of Newcastle School of Population & Health Sciences 21 Claremont Place Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4AA