

Constipation

Constipation is a common problem causing symptoms such as fatigue and headaches. It can also lead to more serious health problems due to the potential for toxins re-entering the body.

The main function of the colon is to absorb water and salts to help conserve the body's fluid levels. It is also the elimination route for undigested matter, many toxins and 'used' hormones.

We should ideally empty our bowels 1-3 times a day, regularly and without effort. If you are having a bowel movement less frequently, or if you experience slow or incomplete evacuation, straining, dry or pellet-like stools, you are likely to be constipated.

Many dietary and lifestyle factors can lead to a lazy bowel or negatively influence on bowel movements:

Diet high in milk
Diet high in sugary foods
Diet low in fibre
Low levels of magnesium

Worry & stress
Lack of mobility
Dehydration/high tea & coffee intake
Diet high in red meat & saturated fats

Chronic Consequences

The odd irregularity in bowel habits, perhaps when we travel to a different climate is of no major consequence, but chronic constipation (passing stools less than four times a week on a regular basis) can lead to all sorts of health problems, including:

- Flatulence & abdominal cramps
- Bloating
- Mineral deficiencies
- Risk of polyps & tumour growth
- Haemorrhoids (piles) & anal fissures
- Headaches and toxicity
- Hormonal imbalances/PMS
- High cholesterol
- Skin problems

Foods that Help Prevent Constipation

Lubricate the Intestines

Spinach
Banana
Sesame oil
Raw honey
Pear
Prune
Peach
Apple
Apricot
Pine nut
Almond

Promote Bowel Movement

Cabbage
Papaya
Peas
Black sesame
Coconut
Sweet potato
Asparagus
Fig
Pineapple
Oat bran

Enhance Gut Flora

Miso
Sauerkraut
Live yogurt
Kefir
Kombucha
Kimchi
Dark green veg

Soothing Properties

Flaxseed
Liquorice root
Aloe vera
Slippery elm
Marshmallow root

Recipe: Flax & Prune Mousse

The Ultimate Constipation Food

1. Put 2 heaped dessert spoons of ground flax seeds (linseeds) in a small bowl/pot/ramekin disk.
2. Cover with 1 cup of pressed prune juice.
3. Leave to soak for 12 hours (e.g. overnight) then eat with a spoon.
4. Repeat 1-2 times a day until regular bowel movements are restored.