

Advice on Constipation



What is constipation ?

Constipation refers to bowel movements that are infrequent or difficult to pass. The stool is often hard and dry. Other symptoms may include abdominal pain, bloating, and feeling incomplete evacuation.

How to Improve Constipation ?

1. A well-balanced diet.
2. 20-30g of fibre intake is recommended for adults daily. Add fruits, vegetables, whole grains and other high-fibre foods to the diet. Eat fewer high-fat foods, like meat and eggs.
3. Drink 6-8 glasses of fluid per day, such as boiled water, clear soup or juice. Reduce caffeinated drinks (Chinese tea, coffee, chocolate), alcohol and sparkling drink.
4. Get at least 2.5 hours of moderate to vigorous exercise a week. Walking is a good choice.
5. Schedule time each day for a bowel movement . e.g. You can wake up in the morning with a cup of warm water to increase bowel movement, or go to the toilet after breakfast.



Adequate Fibre Intake

2 Servings of Fruits + 3 Servings of Vegetables Every Day

Fruits

1 Serving of fruit is equal to:

- 2 small-sized fruits (e.g. Kiwi fruit)
- 1 medium-sized fruit (e.g. orange, apple)
- ½ piece of large-sized fruit (e.g. banana, dragon fruit, papaya)
- ½ bowl of fruit pieces (e.g. watermelon, melon)
- ½ bowl of granulated fruits (e.g. lychees, longan, strawberries)
- 1 tablespoon of dried fruits without added sugar or salts (e.g. dried raisins, dried prunes)
- ¾ pure fruit juice without added sugar (e.g. fresh orange juice with pulp)



Vegetables

1 serving of vegetable is equal to:

- 1 bowl of uncooked leafy vegetables (e.g. lettuce, purple cabbage)
- ½ bowl of cooked vegetables, sprouts, melons, beans or mushrooms (e.g. Chinese cabbage, kale, spinach, cabbage, bean, sprouts, eggplant, carrots, snow peas)
- ¾ Fresh vegetable juice without added sugar (e.g. fresh tomato juice)



Grains

- Grains promote intestinal motility and help excretion of stool. It helps stabilize blood sugar level and cholesterol level.
- Replace white bread, white rice to whole-grain bread, red rice and brown rice.
- Eat more whole oats, multigrain cereals and whole wheat crackers.

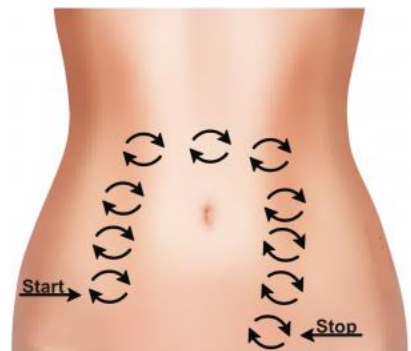
Worst foods for constipation

- Chinese tea & alcohol can increase the amount of fluids lost through urine, causing dehydration. Poor hydration will increase the risk of constipation.
- Fast food most is low in fibre, high in fat.
- Fried food is full of fat and hard to digest. When food moves through the colon slowly, much of water will be taken out of it and makes stool hard and dry.
- Red meat has tough protein fibres that can be difficult for stomach to digest. And it is rich in iron, which can be constipating.



Abdominal massage

- A 10-minute abdominal massage every day can effectively stimulate intestinal peristalsis and improve constipation.
- Start with the right side of the pelvic bone, slowly press up to the bottom of the ribs with your hands, then press to the left to the bottom of the left ribs, and then press down to the left side of the pelvic bone.



Correct toileting posture & skills

- When you are sitting on the toilet, put the feet on a footstool (make sure your knees are bent and higher than the hips). Keep the spine straight and lean body forward. It allows you to straighten the rectum and makes the stool easier to pass out.

Constipation Massage Path



- Avoid excessive straining during bowel movement.
- Bulge your abdomen muscle forwards as you take a deep breath in. “Brace” your abdomen to prevent it from bulging further forwards. Do not tighten your abdomen.
- Relax the anal sphincter to open the bottom and let the stool out.
- Use deep breath to increase the pressure in the abdomen and push down towards your anus. You can make a snake hiss sound (sound of a long “s”). This method can increase the strength of abdominal wall muscles and help bowel movements.