

# Constipation

## What is constipation?

Constipation is infrequent bowel movements or difficult passage of stools that persists for several weeks or longer.

## Signs and Symptoms

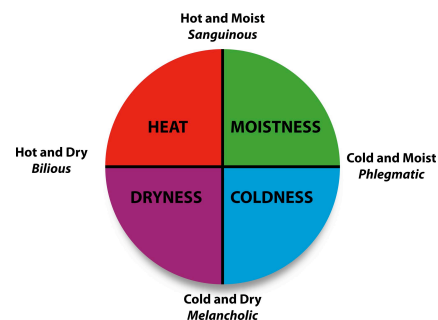
Bowel movements are less frequent than usual (fewer than three times a week); passing the stool is difficult, painful, takes a long time, and feels incomplete; the faeces are like pellets - small, dry and hard, and often very dark brown in colour; the abdomen may feel swollen and uncomfortable; if constipation has been present for some time, there may be bleeding during defaecation. Constipation can result in the development of piles (haemorrhoids) or tears in the anus (anal fissures).

## What Causes Constipation?

Constipation most commonly occurs when waste or stool moves too slowly through the digestive tract. This is due to a lack of heat and moistness, causing the waste to become hard and dry. Risk factors includes poor eating habits, especially where there is not enough fibre (roughage) which is present in vegetables and fruit; and not drinking enough water. A lack of exercise may make constipation worse. Bad bowel habits, such as ignoring the call of nature can lead to constipation. The repeated use of certain medications like some painkillers, antacids, anti-allergy drugs can also lead to constipation.

## The Tibb View on Constipation

According to Tibb, constipation is associated with qualities of **coldness with dryness** due to an improper lifestyle. Included in this is an excessive intake of cold and dry foods which results in stool moving slowly through the digestive tract, causing dry and hard stools. Although people with a melancholic dominant/sub-dominant temperament are mostly likely to develop constipation due to their innate qualities of coldness and dryness, other temperamental types can also suffer from constipation from a faulty diet and other lifestyle factors.



## Treatment and Management of Constipation

Treatment and management is aimed at **reducing excess coldness with dryness** associated with constipation, by implementing Tibb Lifestyle Factors that will **increase the qualities of heat and moistness**. This will assist Physis in addressing both the symptoms and the causes of constipation.

## **Tibb Lifestyle Factors**

### ***Food and Drink***

- Eat **mostly Hot & Moist foods** - such as dates, mangoes, honey and brown bread, **followed by Hot & Dry foods** – like celery, red pepper, onion and oily fish.
- Eat **less of Cold & Moist foods** – such as litchis, watermelon, cucumber and broccoli, and the **least amount of Cold & Dry foods** - like beans, beef, citrus fruit and yogurt.
- Avoid sour foods and drinks, fried foods, spicy foods, soft drinks, meat, processed foods, white flour products, salt, coffee, alcohol and sugar. These foods are difficult to digest and contain little or no fibre.
- Maintain a high-fibre diet of fresh fruits, raw green leafy vegetables, brown rice, oatmeal, sprouts, carrots, and whole-grains. Eat fruits that contain soluble fibre such as apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, cranberries, figs, grapes, peaches and dried prunes.
- Drink at least 8-10 glasses of warm water daily.
- Drink a cup of warm water with 1 tbsp honey and 1 tbsp olive oil 30 minutes before meals.

### ***Other Lifestyle Factors***

- Try to exercise more. Regular exercise increases rhythmic bowel movement (peristalsis). A brisk 20 to 30 minute walk daily is often effective in relieving the problem, especially for pregnant women.
- Practice daily breathing exercises to help sort out any emotional problems like stress.
- Go to the toilet at the same time every day even if the urge doesn't exist. Try to relax as stress tightens the muscles and can cause constipation. Many people find reading a helpful way to relax.
- Never repress the urge to defecate.
- Take a natural laxative as and when necessary.

## **Medication**

### ***Herbal Remedies***

- Grind 2 parts of psyllium seeds, and 1 part each of flaxseed and oat bran and mix with some water to make a paste. Take 1 teaspoon in water before bedtime.
- Take 2 tablespoons of aloe vera juice every morning. Alternatively make it by boiling 3 or 4 aloe vera leaves in 1 litre of water for 30 minutes. This softens the faeces, and heals and cleans the digestive tract.
- Drink a glass of warm water with 1tsp of honey and 1tsp of olive oil 30 minutes before meals.

## **Over The Counter Tibb Medication**

**Laxotabs tablets** - This softens the faeces and increases movement through the gut. It does not flush the system, so diarrhoea and dehydration are not likely. Laxotabs are associated with qualities of **moistness with heat** as it helps combat the coldness with dryness associated with constipation.

**Bonnycare syrup** - this is for infants and children. It helps restore the normal workings of the bowel. Bonnycare is associated with qualities of **heat with moistness** which gently assists and supports digestive function and aids in conditions such as constipation and flatulence.

For an in-depth understanding on the Tibb philosophy and all illness conditions download our latest book "**Healing with Tibb**". For further information: temperament

[http://www.tibb.co.za/concepts\\_tibb.html](http://www.tibb.co.za/concepts_tibb.html); diet charts: <http://www.tibb.co.za/food.html> For recipes: "**Cooking for your body type**" is available for free download For information on Tibb products visit <http://www.tibbherbals.com/>