

Constipation

What is Constipation?

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

Signs and Symptoms

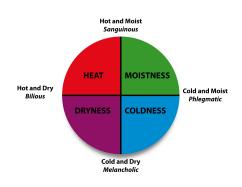
Bowel movements are less frequent than usual (fewer than three times a week); passing the stool is difficult, painful, takes a long time, and feels incomplete; the faeces are like pellets - small, dry and hard, and often very dark brown in colour; the abdomen may feel swollen and uncomfortable; if constipation 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/subdominant temperament are most 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. Whilst Western medicine describes constipation as having less than three bowel movements a week, Tibb advocates, daily bowel movement is essential in the maintenance of health.



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 Advice

- 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.

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.

Cold & Dry Foods

Meats	Vegetables	Fruits	Nuts	Grains & Seeds	Dairy Products	Oils	Spices & Herbs	Drinks	Flavourants	Condiments & Spreads	Confectionary & Desserts	Cereals	Dishes
beef	brussel sprouts	(all sour fruits)	peanuts	barley	sour cream	coconut oil	basil	coffee		balsamic		cornflakes	sour dishes
biltong (beef)	cabbage	green apples		beans(all types)	egg white	corn oil	tamarind	ice		vinegar		maltabella	
crabs	cauliflower	cherries, coconut		corn	sour milk	sesame oil		sour fruit juices		peanut butter		mielie meal	
fish	eggplant	china/dry fruit		couscous	yoghurt			tea (black)		pickles		millet	
knuckles	green beans	granadilla		lentils						tomato sauce			
mussels	mushrooms	grape fruit		maize						worcestershire			
ostrich	peas	lemon, lime		mielies						sauce			
oysters	potatoes	naartjies, oranges		popcorn						vinegar			
pork	sauerkraut	pineapple,plums		poppy seeds									
snails	tomatoes	prunes, pomegranate		samp									
snoek		raspberries		sesame seeds									
tripe		strawberries											
tuna		sultanas											

Cold & Moist Foods

Meats	Vegetables	Fruits	Nuts	Grains & Seeds	Dairy Products	Oils	Spices & Herbs	Drinks	Flavourants	Condiments & Spreads	Confectionary & Desserts	Cereals	Dishes
duck	beetroot	apricot	macadamia	cucumber seeds	coconut milk		cardamom	milk shakes	fructose		custard	pronutro	
rabbit	baby marrow	cranberries		linseed	cow's milk		coriander	rooibos	glucose		ice cream	rice crispies	
	butternut	figs		melon seeds	goats milk		cumin	sugar cane	rose syrup		sago		
	broccoli, carrots	kiwi fruit		pumpkin seeds	buttermilk		vanilla	juice		1			
	cucumber	litchis, melons		rice cakes	butter			water					
	squash	mulberries		rice	margarine								
	lady fingers (okra)	pawpaw, pears		semolina	rice milk								
	lettuce	prickly pears			soya milk								
	pumpkin	quince											
	radish, sprouts	spanspek											
	soya beans	sweet apples											
	tofu												
	zucchini												

Hot & Dry Foods

Meats	Vegetables	Fruits	Nuts	Grains & Seeds	Dairy Products	Oils	Spices & Herbs	Drinks	Flavourants	Condiments & Spreads	Confectionary & Desserts	Cereals	Dishes
all small bird	bitter gourd	avocado	cashews	celery seeds	eggs	mustard oil	aniseed	alcohol	pungent and	chilli sauce			spicy dishes
meat	celery	grapes	hazel nuts	chickpeas			cinnamon	grape juice	bitter	mustard sauce			
chicken	green pepper		pecan nuts	fenugreek seeds			cloves, garlic	herbal teas	flavourants	peri-peri			
lobsters	leek		walnuts	gram flour			green/red chilli	(see herbs)		sauce			
mackerel	onion			mustard seeds			fenugreek						
oily fish	red pepper			papad			lavender						
pilchards	yellow pepper						nutmeg						
prawns							oregano						
sardines							paprika						
							parsley						
							rocket, rosemary						
							saffron						
							tarragon						

Hot & Moist Foods

Meats	Vegetables	Fruits	Nuts	Grains & Seeds	Dairy Products	Oils	Spices & Herbs	Drinks	Flavourants	Condiments & Spreads	Confectionary & Desserts	Cereals	Dishes
buck	artichokes	bananas	almonds	bread	clarified butter	castor oil	bay leaves	green tea	honey	mayonnaise	biscuits	all bran flakes	sweet dishes
goat	asparagus	dates	brazil nuts	bulgar wheat	condensed milk	olive oil	black pepper	hot water	molasses		cakes	bran	
goose	olives	guavas	pistachios	flour	cheese	sunflower oil	cayenne pepper	juices	salt		chocolate	honey smaks	
lamb	spinach	mangoes	apricot kernels	pasta	cream cheese		chives	(see fruits)	sugar		liquorice	muesli	
liver	spring onion	peaches		rye bread	mother's milk		ginger, fennel	herbal teas			vermicelli	nutri-k	
mutton	sweet potato	papaya		sunflower seeds	(for babies)		green masala	(see herbs)				nutrific	
turkey	turnips			wheat	fresh cream		marjoram					oats	
				macaroni			mint, sage					puffed wheat	
				dill seeds			soya sauce					taystee wheat	
							thyme,turmeric					weetbix	
							watercress						
							white pepper						