

Constipation

What is Constipation?

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

Signs and Symptoms

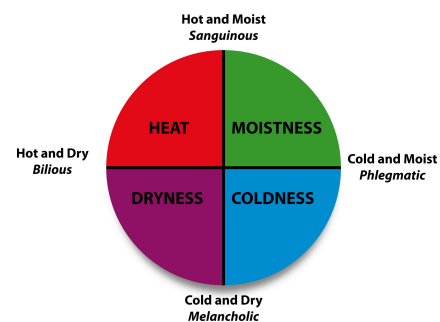
Bowel movements are less frequent than usual (fewer than three times a week); passing the stool is difficult, painful, takes a long time, and feels incomplete; the faeces are like pellets - small, dry and hard, and often very dark brown in colour; the abdomen may feel swollen and uncomfortable; if constipation 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 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 1 tsp of honey and 1 tsp of olive oil 30 minutes before meals.

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 meat	bitter melon	avocado	cashews	celery seeds	eggs	mustard oil	aniseed	alcohol	pungent and bitter flavourants	chilli sauce			spicy dishes		
	celery	grapes		hazelnuts			chickpeas	cinnamon		grape juice				mustard sauce	
	green pepper			pecan nuts			fenureek seeds	cloves, garlic		herbal teas				peri-peri sauce	
	leek			walnuts			gram flour	green/red chilli		(see herbs)					
	onion						mustard seeds	fenureek							
	red pepper						papad	lavender							
	yellow pepper							nutmeg							
										oregano					
										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)						
turkey	turnips			wheat	fresh cream		marjoram							
				macaroni				mint, sage						
				dill seeds				soya sauce						
							thyme, turmeric							
					watercress									
					white pepper									