



Cassara Consulting
"Your Neighborhood Nutritionists"

Dietitian - Nutritionist - Education - Counseling - Insurance Accepted



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Tips for Preventing Constipation



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When it comes to bowel movements, each of us is different. Having a bowel movement three times a week may be normal for one person, while daily bowel movements may be common for another. However, if you go less than three times per week, you may be constipated. Other symptoms of constipation include bowel movements that are hard, dry or lumpy; bowel movements that are difficult or painful to pass; or the sensation that the bowel continually remains full or that not all of it has passed.

There are many possible causes of constipation. For example, a lack of dietary fiber, not getting enough fluids and low levels of physical activity may increase the risk. Other causes may include health conditions such as celiac disease or irritable bowel syndrome. Sometimes certain medications or supplements may cause constipation, such as prescription drugs for depression, pain control, high blood pressure and Parkinson's disease. Over-the-counter medication, such as calcium and iron supplements, allergy drugs and antacids with aluminum can also increase your risk of becoming constipated.

Laxatives and Enemas

Sometimes people rely on laxatives and enemas to help keep their bowel movements regular. These over-the-counter treatments stimulate bowel movements. However, using either of

these treatments too often can weaken your bowel's ability to work normal. Using both laxatives and enemas too frequently may lead to constipation. Before you reach for a laxative or enema, talk with your health care provider about any changes in your bowel movements.

Ignoring the Urge to Go

Just as laxatives and enemas may do harm to your bowels, so might holding or restricting bowel movements when you have to go. Holding a bowel movement beyond the normal urge may affect normal muscle functioning and lead to constipation.

Food Choices that Impact Regularity

Consuming a variety of foods that include dietary fiber, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, along with adequate fluid intake may help keep your bowel movements regular, as well as prevent and relieve constipation. Limit foods that are lower in fiber, such as highly processed and prepared foods by replacing them with higher fiber choices. This should be done gradually and while increasing fluid intake. Learn more about these topics:

- [Dietary fiber](#)
- [Easy ways to boost fiber in your daily diet](#)
- [How to add whole grains to your diet](#)

Being Active is Important

Being active may also help to keep your bowel movements regular. Individuals who do not participate in regular physical activity may be more likely to become constipated. Need motivation to get moving? Check out:

- [Why you should make physical activity a part of your day](#)
- [Make fitness fun for the whole family](#)

How a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Can Help

A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help assess the adequacy of the fiber and fluids in your diet, as well as suggest options to help reduce your risk for constipation. To find an RDN in your area, search the Academy's online [database](#).

Reviewed October 2019 by Barbara Gordon, RDN, LD. Published October 22, 2019. To learn more healthy tips, visit www.eatright.org and consult a registered dietitian nutritionist. Info obtained from www.eatright.org.