

# Healthy BOWEL

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# The BOWEL

How important is the Bowel?

There is a saying...  
If you don't eat, you don't shit.  
If you don't shit, you die.

Could it be put any simpler?

Animals eat to provide energy for the physical body.  
Eating is a pleasurable experience, an experience to look forward to and to take time over.

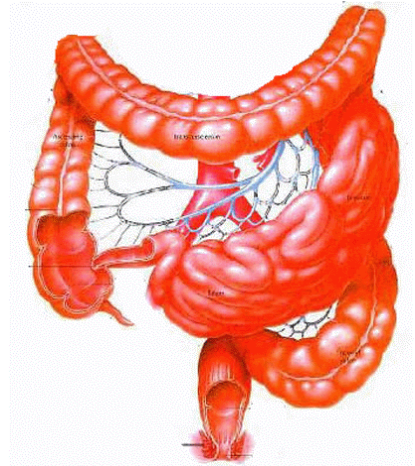
The food we eat contains portions that our physical bodies cannot assimilate.

Our bodies produce metabolic by-products (waste) as a result of living.

If we did not remove the waste then we would continue to expand, or clog up and die.

Having a bowel motion is meant to be a pleasurable experience.

Make the most of the experience and take your time.  
Rejoice in the experience, each and every time.  
This experience is keeping you alive and healthy.



## **Disclaimer:**

- The information provided in this document arises from my own knowledge and research as a practicing naturopath.
- All material in this document is provided for your information only and may not be construed as medical advice or instruction.
- There is no inherent suggestion of diagnosis of any condition within the precepts of this document.
- No action or inaction should be taken based solely on the contents of the information in this document.
- If there is any suspicion of a condition or symptom mentioned in this document, then consult a qualified health practitioner for advice.
- I reserve the right to alter and/or modify any information in this document at any time as new or improved information comes to hand.

# Bowel Motions

Having got all the good food inside and after extracting all the goodness from it, we need to be rid of the residue, those parts for which our body has no further use.

Our metabolism produces elements that are toxic to our tissues. Most of these substances are removed by the liver through the bile duct into the small intestine. Bile salts help to assimilate fats and oils.

Bowel motions are an essential part of life, and it should be easy – no straining.

After pre-digested food leaves the stomach, the small intestine completes digestion and absorbs food nutrients. The remainder is pushed, through the muscular action called peristalsis, into the large bowel where more water is removed [and you were concerned about the recycling of water from sewerage. Our bodies do it all the time]. The resulting faeces are temporarily stored in the rectum before being expelled from the body via the anus.

When we eat a meal of sufficient size, there is a neuromuscular reflex from the small intestine that stimulates a bowel motion.

If you are not stimulated to pass stool shortly after breakfast, then consider increasing the amount that you have for breakfast. [Coffee and toast does not constitute a breakfast suitable for sustaining you until lunch time.] This goes hand in hand with ensuring adequate restorative sleep and waking early enough to have time for a quick walk and a sustaining breakfast.

Some people are stimulated to pass stool after each meal – this is normal.

Other people only pass stool when they become to feel uncomfortable or bloated. It is most likely that these people have trained their body to ignore the natural signals.

Water normally makes up about three quarters of faecal content, while the rest is composed of solids including undigested fibre, intestinal bacteria and dietary fats.

Many illnesses and events can affect the colour and texture of faeces. Always see your doctor if you experience changes in bowel motions that don't resolve within a day or two. Seek urgent medical attention if your stools are bloody.

## **Characteristics of the normal, healthy bowel motion include:**

- Bowel motions should be firm, moist and easy to pass and there should be little or no residue remaining on the anus.
- Ideally one should have a motion at least once every day.  
Regularity differs from one person to the next - the range of 'normal' includes once per week to several times every day, depending on the individual.
- The average adult produces between 100g and 180g of faeces every day.
- Bowel motions are brown because they contain bile pigments.
- Bacteria use chemical reactions to break down the faeces. These chemical reactions produce smelly compounds like hydrogen sulphide, which account for the characteristic odour.

## Changes in colour

Healthy bowel motions are mid-brown. If your faeces change colour, seek medical attention immediately, as some of the causes may include serious illnesses.

## Things to remember

- Water makes up about three quarters of faecal content, while the rest is composed of solids such as undigested fibre, and micro-organisms (bowel flora).
- Bowel motions should be firm, moist, easy to pass and coloured mid-brown.
- If you go when nature calls, the faeces should virtually fall out when you sit down.
- There should be no need for straining, or waiting.
- Squatting is better and more natural, as the sphincter muscles are able to relax further, making it easier.
- Red, maroon or black faeces could indicate internal bleeding, so visit your doctor immediately.

## Bowel transit time

### Definition

The time it takes for the food that is eaten to make the journey from the mouth to the anus is known as the bowel transit time. The type of diet affects the bowel transit time. When many foods that have a lot of fibre (whole grains, vegetables, and fruits) are eaten, a more rapid transit time and a heavier, bulkier stool occurs.

### Normal Results

The bowel transit time varies even in the same person. The first of the colour should appear in the stool about 12 to 14 hours after it is taken. The last of the colour will pass within 36 to 48 hours.

### What Abnormal Results Mean

If the times are much longer, 72 hours or more, it may indicate a slowed bowel function. A high fibre diet may shorten the bowel transit time.

Other factors, such as insufficient neurotransmitters in the bowel, may lead to slow or sluggish bowel motion.

### How a self-test is performed

Eat a normal diet for a few days, with no beetroot or other colouring agent.

Eat a medium beetroot (grated and raw) with a meal.

Then observe your bowel movements and record how long it takes after the consumption of the beetroot until the red colour first appears in your stool. Keep track of how long it takes for the colour to disappear from the stools.

Do not mistake the red colour diffusing into the water in the bowl as blood.

What happens when there is a problem with the removal waste product?

# Constipation!

Constipation is the passage of small amounts of hard, dry faeces, usually fewer than three times a week.

People who are constipated may find it difficult and painful to have a bowel movement. Other symptoms of constipation include headache, feeling bloated, uncomfortable and sluggish.

At one time or another, almost everyone [myself, in my teen years, included] gets constipated. Poor diet and lack of exercise are usually the causes. In most cases, constipation is temporary and not serious. Understanding its causes, prevention, and treatment will help most people find relief.

## What causes constipation?

To understand constipation, it helps to know how the colon (large intestine) works. As food residue moves through the colon, water is absorbed, forming waste products, or stool. Muscle contractions (peristalsis) in the colon push the stool toward the rectum. By the time stool reaches the rectum, it is semi-solid because most of the water has been absorbed.

The hard and dry stools of constipation occur when the colon absorbs too much water or if the colon's muscle contractions are slow or sluggish, causing the stool to move through the colon too slowly.

Common causes of constipation are:

- Not enough water. Especially in hot weather.
- Lack of exercise
- Ignoring the urge to have a bowel movement
- Not enough fibre in the diet, but too much fibre can also cause constipation
- Not enough oils in the diet
- Medications
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Changes in life or routine such as pregnancy, older age, and travel
- Abuse of laxatives
- Specific diseases such as stroke
- Problems with the colon and rectum
- Problems with intestinal function (chronic idiopathic constipation)

**Note:**

- Too many modern commercially produced 'convenience' foods have too little natural fibre.
- The average (80 kg) person needs 2 litres of water per average day. Quite obviously, more in hot weather.
- Too many of us spend too much time sitting.
- Many pharmaceutical medications can cause constipation.
- Myths about constipation have led to a serious abuse of laxatives.
- People who ignore the urge to have a bowel movement may eventually stop feeling the urge, which can lead to constipation.
- Sitting on the 'throne' is inefficient for this most natural of bodily functions.
- Physiologically, it is more efficient to squat when passing stool, and urine. The sphincter muscles relax easier and the rectum is straight when one squats, making the passing of faeces easier.  
'Steps' designed to fit around the 'throne' are available commercially.

**Points to Remember**

- Constipation affects almost everyone at one time or another.
- Many people think they are constipated when, in fact, their bowel movements are regular.
- The most common causes of constipation are poor diet and lack of exercise.
- Additional causes of constipation include medications, irritable bowel syndrome, abuse of laxatives, and specific diseases.
- A medical history and physical examination may be the only diagnostic tests needed before treatment suggestions are made.
- In most cases, following these simple tips will help relieve symptoms and prevent recurrence of constipation:
  - Eat a well-balanced diet that includes beans, whole grains, fresh fruits, and vegetables. By weight, the diet should have about 36% whole protein, 16% virgin oils and fats, and 48% complex carbohydrates [0% protein isolate, 0% refined oils, 0% refined carbohydrates].
  - Include adequate oils and fats in the diet. For a 2000-calorie diet, this is approximately 6 teaspoons of cold pressed virgin oil.
  - Drink plenty of water.
  - Exercise regularly.
  - Set aside time after breakfast or dinner for undisturbed visits to the toilet.
  - Do not ignore the urge to have a bowel movement.
  - Understand that normal bowel habits vary.
  - Whenever a significant or prolonged change in bowel habits occurs, check with a health care professional.

Most people with mild constipation do not need laxatives. However, doctors may recommend laxatives for a limited time for people with chronic constipation.

## Some methods to relieve constipation

For chronic constipation I advise to take it slowly at first and start with reduced amounts of the following, building up to the suggested levels as things get moving. This will take longer to have an effect, but a condition that has taken years to establish will take some time to rectify.

1. **WALK.** Walking (a constitutional) is a natural method for stimulating the action of peristalsis. Get up and go for a brisk 20-minute walk first thing in the morning. (I prefer to start off slowly. Warm the system up before picking up the pace.) This should help to get things moving.
2. **Olive oil.** Drink 1 to 2 tablespoons (30 ml) of extra virgin olive oil and chase it with a little lemon juice. Do this twice a day. If this is not successful by the third day, add...  
AND/OR
3. **Vitamin C.** Take 1 gram every three hours while awake. When things get going, cut back a little on the amount taken.  
OR  
As a last resort, when all else has failed
4. **Magnesium.** Epsom salts. Take 1 gram three times a day or as recommended by your friendly pharmacist.  
Drink plenty of water, as the magnesium salt will reduce the amount of water reabsorbed from the bowel.

Failing these, there are a number of other Foods, Nutritional supplements and Herbal medicines that can be used for the treatment of constipation.

## These Foods/Herbs may Alleviate Constipation

### Water

Water (glass of warm Water consumed upon wakening) may be effective for some cases of Constipation.

### Fruit

Apricot (juice).

Banana.

Figs (soaked overnight in Water).

Grapefruit (juice)

Kiwi Fruit.

Lemon (juice)

Prunes may be an effective laxative that may alleviate most cases of Constipation (due to the Sorbitol content of Prunes).

Tamarind

Watermelon.

## Grains

Barley  
Barley Bran  
Rice Bran (17 grams per day) increases the mass of stools and increasing the frequency of bowel movements.  
Wheat Bran - avoid it if you can.  
\*\*Wheat bran is suspected of scouring the intestinal tract, causing damage to the micro-villi of the intestinal wall, leading to further problems. See 'Food Sensitivities'.  
Rye.

## Herbs

Aloe Vera (juice, consumed orally).  
Chickweed (tea).  
Dandelion  
Fenugreek  
Green Tea  
Nettle (tea)  
Noni juice  
Raspberry Leaf (in high doses).  
Yellow Dock.

The following herbs act by irritating the bowel wall. They should only be used as a last resort and for very short term (a few days). Continued use of such herbs may interfere with the natural muscular contractions of the intestine and bowel (peristalsis), leading to dependence.

Cascara sagrada  
Fo-Ti  
Senna

## Oils (dietary Oils)

Castor Oil is a well-known modern traditional treatment for Constipation.  
Olive Oil may act as a mild laxative in Constipation patients.  
Coconut Oil may act as a mild laxative in Constipation patients.

## Processed Foods

Molasses.

## Seeds

Flax Seeds (2 - 3 teaspoons of ground Flax Seeds meal consumed with Water)  
Psyllium Seeds (with water), by adding bulk to stools.

## Vegetables

Artichoke Leaf.  
Avocado  
Beetroot (juice).  
Cabbage (juice).  
Carrots  
Green Peas  
Kelp (the Algin content of Kelp produce a laxative effect by retaining Water in the Colon).  
Potato (juice)  
Rhubarb.  
Rutabaga  
Spinach  
Turnips

**Remember: DRINK WATER and WALK**

## References:

The orthodox among you will want an extensive list of material to read.

My personal attitude toward the orthodox approach of including each and every piece of information that I have heard, seen or read during my life as the list of references would be most misleading. It would also be of greater length than the book itself and make for very boring reading.

It is my view that: The orthodox approach of including references to back up ones findings prevents the expressing of new and original approaches to all endeavours.

At some point, for all ideas and concepts, there must have been a place where there was no previous material to which to refer.

There is no extensive list of documents for you to refer to.

Your proof of what I write will be only in your practice of those suggestions provided. Should you fail to partake of the practice, then you will have the evidence of what I write.

For those of an esoteric nature: You understand that this material has come your way for a reason [references or not], and that the evidence supporting this material will come your way in due course.

However, I will offer suitable references where I find it appropriate. That is, naturally enough, with material that supports my concepts.