



Self-care Information

Constipation

Tips on how you can self manage constipation in adults.

“Supporting you to look after you”

Key advice:

- Try to eat foods that are higher in fibre, such as fruit and vegetables.
- Try to drink plenty of water.
- Try gentle exercise.
- Speak to your pharmacist or GP if you think other medications might be causing constipation.
- Your pharmacist can help choose the best treatment for you, if you need it.

This advice is about constipation in adults. Take your child to a GP if you think they are constipated.

What is constipation?

Constipation is a common problem that can affect people of all ages.

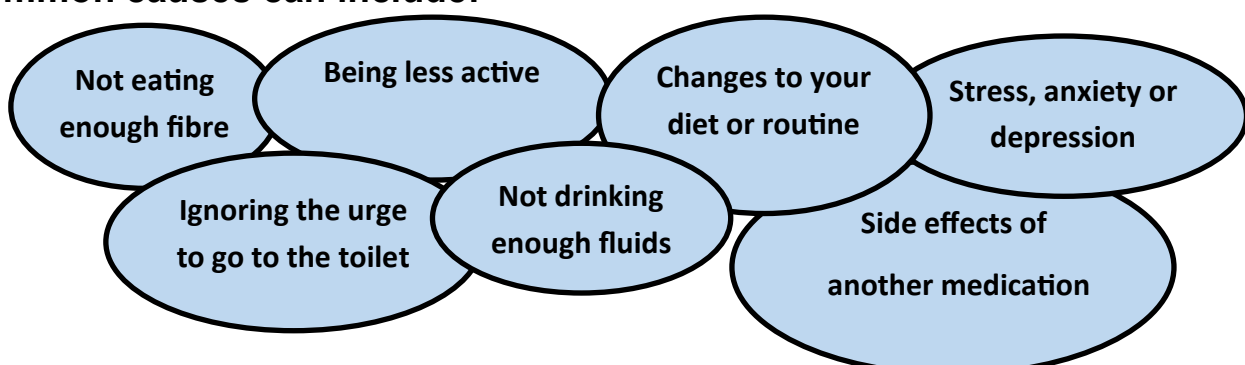
It is likely to be constipation if:

- Your poo is hard, dry or lumpy.
- You are having to strain, or have pain when you have a poo.
- You have not had a poo at least 3 times in the last week.

What causes constipation?

Constipation can have many causes in adults, but sometimes there's no clear reason.

Common causes can include:



Changes to help prevent constipation

Making small changes to your diet can help to make your poo softer and easier to pass.

Try to eat a healthy balanced diet. If you can, try to include fruits that contain sorbitol such as:

- Apples
- Apricots
- Grapes (and raisins)
- Raspberries
- Strawberries.

It is recommended to gradually increase the fibre in your diet. You could try adding some wheat bran, oats or linseed to your diet.

Try to improve your toilet routine. Try to keep to a regular time, and allow yourself plenty of time to use the toilet. If you feel the urge to poo, try not to delay going to the toilet.

It can make it easier to poo by resting your feet on a low stool whilst using the toilet. If you can, try to raise your knees above your hips.

Speak to a pharmacist if diet and lifestyle changes are not helping.



They can suggest a laxative that is suitable for you.

A laxative is a medicine that can help you to poo more regularly

Laxatives should only be used for a short time, and most work within 3 days.

Did you know?

You can buy cheaper non-branded medicines alternatives from a pharmacy or local supermarket

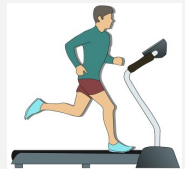


Let your pharmacist know if you take any other medicines, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, as this may affect which treatments you can use safely.

How can I avoid constipation?

You could try

- ✓ Eating a healthy diet—Include more fruit, vegetables, seeds, pulses and cereals.
- ✓ Drinking plenty of water.
- ✓ Exercising more. A daily walk or run can help.
- ✓ Going to the toilet when you feel the urge to go.
- ✓ Reviewing if any other medication you are taking could be causing the constipation.
- ✓ Speaking to a pharmacist for advice if these things aren't helping.



Constipation in children and babies

The causes and symptoms are much the same as in adults, however a child might also:

- Have poo that looks like “rabbit droppings”
- Have stomach pain or poor appetite that is better after they have had a poo.
- Have constipation if they feel pressured, or are interrupted whilst potty training.

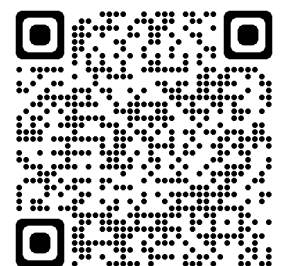
Take your child to a GP if you think they are constipated

See your GP or call 111 if:

- You have been constipated or have a feeling of not emptying the bowel fully, that has lasted 6 weeks.
- Your tummy becomes swollen, or you are sick.
- You are over 50, and have never had constipation before.
- You think a medication may be causing the constipation.
- There is blood in your poo.
- You have unintentional weight loss, feel tired all the time, feel 'not quite right', sweaty or feverish, or these symptoms do not go away within 4 to 6 weeks.
- Your child has suspected constipation.

Here are some useful links to further information

NHS Website	https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/constipation/ https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/health/constipation-in-children/
Patient Website	https://patient.info/digestive-health/constipation
Or visit your local pharmacy for advice	



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