

What to Eat When Constipated

Around 1 in 4 Canadians experience occasional constipation.¹



What is Constipation?

Constipation occurs when you have less frequent bowel movements than usual. This can lead to stools that are hard and dry, making them difficult to pass.

Signs & Symptoms



You might experience **excessive straining** or a feeling of not completely emptying your bowels.²

Foods that are high in fibre can help ease constipation:³

Fruits



- High fibre choices include berries, apples & peaches.
- Do not peel their skins as they have a lot of fibre.

Starches



- Eat product with whole grains.
- Opt for brown or wild rice or high-fibre cereals.

Vegetables & Legumes



- High-fibre choices include corn, broccoli, beans, potatoes with skin, lentils, chickpeas, walnuts, and almonds!

Lean Meats



- Low-fat meat such as fish and chicken will not make constipation worse, but do not contain any fibre themselves.



- Continuing to eat processed junk food, fried food or fast food can prevent you from getting things moving.³
- If you forget to hydrate, it becomes harder to move the stool along, as it becomes harder and the gut becomes drier.

If dietary methods aren't working, over-the-counter laxatives may be suggested including:⁴

- **Stimulant laxatives** (help stimulate the gut muscles to move waste through the gut)
- **Osmotics** (draw water into colon, for easy stool passage)
- **Bulk-forming laxatives** (these products add more mass to the stool, making it softer and easier to pass)
- **Stool softeners** (these laxatives help the stool absorb more water, making it softer)



Contact your healthcare provider if:⁵



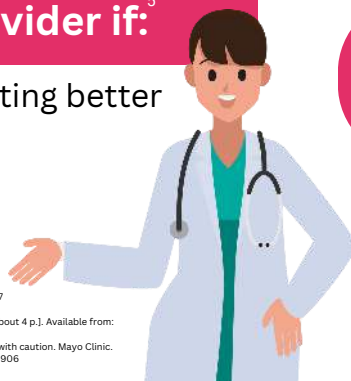
- Your constipation is not getting better



- Nausea or stomach pain



- Blood in the stool



High-fibre foods are a great way to relieve constipation. Foods that are high in water content help hydrate the gut and soften the stool to keep it moving along.

References:

1. Werth, Barry L. "Epidemiology of constipation in adults: Why estimates of prevalence differ." *J. Epidemiol. Res* 5 (2019): 37
2. <https://gi.org/topics/constipation-and-defecation-problems/>
3. A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia [Internet]. Johns Creek (GA): Ebix, Inc., A.D.A.M.; c1997-2020.; Constipation – self-care; [about 4 p.]. Available from: <https://medlineplus.gov/patientinstructions/000120.htm>
4. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. (2022, March 3). Over-the-counter laxatives for constipation: Use with caution. Mayo Clinic. Retrieved June 2, 2022, from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/constipation/in-depth/laxatives/art-20045906>
5. <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/constipation>

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