








Bristol Stool Chart

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily)
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces. Entirely Liquid

Severe constipation

Mild Constipation

Normal

Normal

Lacking Fiber

Mild Diarrhea

Severe Diarrhea



CONSTIPATION

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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WHAT IS CONSTIPATION?

Constipation is a common condition where stool becomes dry, hard, and difficult or uncomfortable to pass. Patterns of bowel movements can vary between people from 3 times per day to 3 times per week. A person is generally considered constipated when bowel movements occur less than 3 times per week.

CAUSES

Some medical conditions and medications can lead to constipation but most often it is due to lifestyle factors as follows:

- not eating enough fiber (vegetables, fruits, wholegrains)
- dehydration or not drinking enough fluids
- sedentary lifestyle (sitting too much) or not getting enough physical activity
- stress
- changes to your regular routine (travel, shiftwork)
- ignoring the urge to have a bowel movement

COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Fewer bowel movements than usual, less than 3 per week.
- Hard, dry, or lumpy stools.
- Straining or pain when passing stools.
- Feeling that not all stool has passed.
- Bloating and nausea.

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

Mild constipation is not alarming. See your doctor if you have any of the following:

- constipation lasting longer than 3 weeks
- severe stomach pain
- blood in your stools or on the toilet paper
- weight loss without trying
- other unusual changes in the shape or color of your stool

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Depending on your symptoms and medical history your doctor may order other tests to investigate your constipation.

Treatment options include:

- Lifestyle changes as outlined in the prevention tips below.
- Medications such as laxatives to help your bowels move.
- Fiber Supplements.

PREVENTION TIPS

The following tips can help you avoid constipation:

- Do not ignore the urge to pass stool.
- Stay active and exercise regularly, exercise can stimulate the muscles in the digestive system to help pass stool.
- Drink plenty of fluids, consume at least 8 glasses of water or sugar free liquids daily.

PREVENTION TIPS (...cont)

- Eat fewer foods with low amounts of fiber such as processed foods, fast foods, dairy, and meats.
- Eat more high-fiber foods including vegetables, fruits, beans and wholegrains.
- Insoluble fibers: increase the bulk and consistency of bowel movements making them easier to pass. Examples: vegetables and wholegrains.
- Soluble fibers: absorb water and form a gel-like paste, which softens the stools and improve its consistency. Examples: oat bran, barley, nuts, seeds, lentils, and peas.
- Non-fermentable soluble fiber: such as psyllium, are the best choice for treating constipation, you can buy this over the counter as Metamucil.
- Eat more prunes which are packed with fiber and a sugar called sorbitol, a natural laxative that keeps food moving through the digestive system.
- Drinking caffeinated beverages, like coffee, can stimulate the muscles in the digestive system, limit to 4 cups per day.
- Eating pre or probiotics may help prevent chronic constipation. These foods improve digestive health by feeding the beneficial bacteria in the gut, improving the balance of gut bacteria.