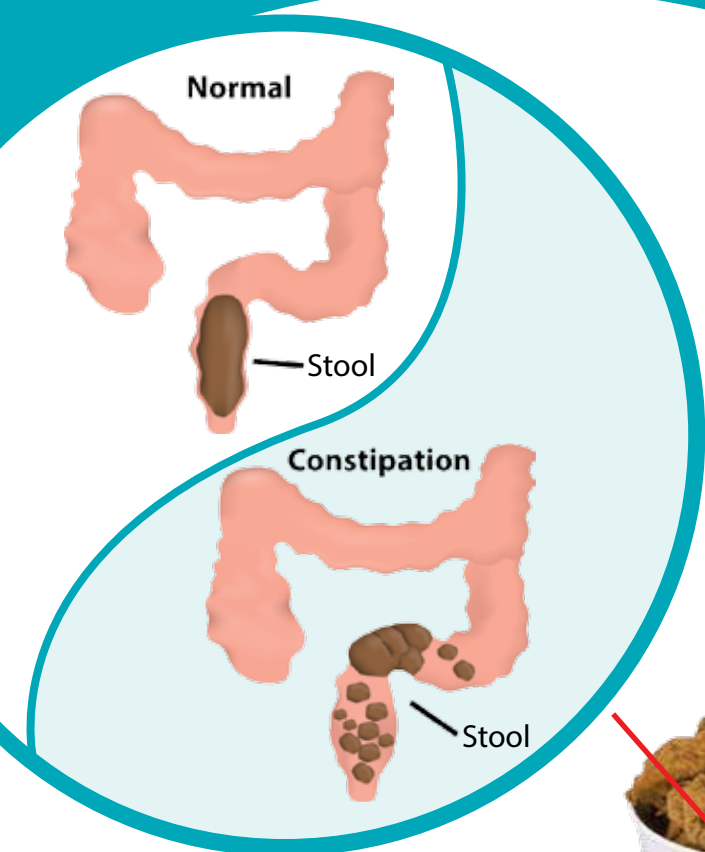


Constipation in Adults



Let's learn about it

Constipation means it is hard to have a bowel movement (poop). Most people will have constipation at some point. Long-term constipation is not normal.

You may have long-term constipation if you have 2 or 3 of these symptoms for at least 3 months:

- Hard to have a bowel movement for more than 1 in every 4 bowel movements.
- Try to have a bowel movement, but nothing happens, even though you feel like you need to go.
- Have less than 3 bowel movements a week.

What can cause constipation?

- Eating greasy, fried foods or sweets (candy and pop).
- Pregnancy, slow metabolism (hypothyroidism), and some other conditions.
- Milk, cheese or other dairy products do **not** cause constipation if eaten in regular amounts.



Nutrition tips

Let's learn what to do

✓ Focus on healthy foods

- Country foods are a healthy choice.
- Eat foods from each of the 4 food groups.
- Each meal should have at least 3 of the 4 food groups.
- Each snack should have at least 2 of the 4 food groups.
- These are foods that should be eaten regularly to prevent constipation:



✓ **Have high fibre foods and water every day**

- High fibre foods and water can help lower the risk of constipation by keeping water in the gut. This makes stool (poop) move more easily through your gut.
- Eating a high fibre cereal every day is an easy way to get enough fibre. Oatmeal, bran flakes and bran sticks are all good choices.

✓ **Prunes can help with constipation**

- Prunes can make stool softer and easier to pass.
- Start with one serving each day. Slowly add more until you get relief. If you eat more too quickly, you can get gas and cramps.
- ¼ cup of prunes is one serving.
- ½ cup of prune juice is one serving.



Date _____ Name _____

Healthcare Provider (Name) _____

Lifestyle tips



✓ Physical activity keeps bowel movements regular.

✓ Aim to have a bowel movement at the same time each day. Choose a time when you don't feel rushed.



✓ When you have an urge for a bowel movement, don't hold it in. This could raise your risk of having constipation.



✓ If you have trouble during a bowel movement, try using something to lift your legs higher. This puts your gut in a better position.



✓ Take care of yourself. Limit alcohol, eat well and be tobacco-free.



✓ See a nurse or doctor if:

- You experience a sudden change in bowel habits.
- You are on medications that may cause constipation.
- Dietary changes do not help.
- If you plan to take laxatives.

