

Natural Help 4...

Constipation



What is Constipation?

Even though **constipation** is a common problem of the digestive system, for many people it is an embarrassing subject to discuss. The term **constipation** often means different things to different people, ranging from **less frequent bowel movements** than normal to more **difficult passage of stools**-- or a combination of both.

Being constipated can make you feel uncomfortable, bloated, heavy and sluggish. Regular elimination of waste products from the body is vital to maintaining health.

Diagnosing Constipation

The diagnosis of **constipation** is based upon your symptoms, a physical examination, and your medical history. Your doctor may also examine the nervous system and the thyroid gland, and check your medications to **check that constipation is not a side effect of something else**.

Most cases of **constipation** are either self-diagnosed or diagnosed in your doctor's office. However, if your health care practitioner feels it is warranted, there are certain special investigations and tests that can be performed for more **complicated cases of chronic constipation**.

Tests to Diagnose Constipation

- Stool sample analysis to check for any internal bleeding.
- Thyroid function test to check for hypothyroidism, as **constipation is a common symptom of hypothyroidism**.
- A Barium enema is an x-ray test that will be able to clearly reveal the anatomy and contents of your rectum and colon.
- Sigmoidoscopy is a procedure in which a flexible lighted instrument is inserted through the anus to examine the rectum and lower colon (sigmoid).
- Colonoscopy is a procedure during which a flexible, camera-equipped tube is used to examine the entire colon.
- Anorectal manometry is a procedure in which a narrow, flexible tube is inserted into your anus and rectum to determine the underlying cause of the problem and rule out serious conditions associated with **constipation**, such as tumors or polyps.

Symptoms of Constipation

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It is not intended to diagnose or treat any medical condition. Nothing in this eBook is intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition.

Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this eBook or on ANY website.

The signs and **symptoms of constipation** include:

- Abdominal bloating
- Cramps or abdominal pain
- Experiencing hard, compacted stools that are difficult or painful to pass
- No bowel movement or the urge to move bowels (over three days for adults or four days for children)

Related Symptoms

- Flatulence with the inability to pass a stool
- Headaches
- Halitosis
- Coated tongue
- Pale complexion
- Dizziness
- Nausea and appetite loss
- Diarrhea

What Causes Constipation?

Constipation can result from a number of factors revolving around **diet, fluid intake and medications**.

Possible Causes of Constipation

- A diet low in fiber (lacking whole grains, bran, fresh fruit and vegetables)
- Insufficient intake of liquids such as water, juice or tea
- An inactive lifestyle
- Poor bowel habits such as ignoring the urge to have bowel movements
- Stress
- Medications such as painkillers (especially codeine), antacids, antispasmodic drugs, antidepressants or iron tablets
- Medical conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), underactive thyroid gland (hypothyroidism), spinal injury, multiple sclerosis, kidney failure, colon or rectal cancer, too much calcium in the blood, tumors and lesions of the bowel can all result in **constipation**
- Habitual use of **laxatives** and enemas can have a rebound effect of causing **constipation**
- Changes in the environment
- Older adults often suffer from **constipation** due to a combination of poor diet, insufficient fluids, poor bowel habits, or the side effects of prescription medication
- Pregnancy commonly causes **constipation** - hormonal changes and pressure on the bowel by the heavy womb can cause prolonged **constipation**, which can in turn result in the development of anal fissures or hemorrhoids

Help for Constipation

Various treatments can help to **ease the symptoms of constipation** and promote a healthy digestive system. Conventional medication, complementary



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Michele Carelse, Clinical Psychologist



All of our natural remedies are formulated by our expert team of herbalists, naturopaths and homeopaths, and headed by Michele Carelse.

Michele has had years of experience in the manufacturing and use of natural remedies. In addition, she is a trained Clinical Psychologist and has been incorporating natural remedies into her treatment of patients with depression, anxiety, ADD, ADHD and stress for many years with spectacular results.

therapy and natural remedies together with a high fiber diet and regular exercise will **keep your digestive system regular**.

Conventional Medicine

- Over-the-counter stimulant [laxatives](#) cause bowel muscles to contract.
- Prescription medicine such as polyethylene glycol (Miralax) softens the stool and Tegaserod (Zelnorm) helps the intestinal muscles contract better.

Most cases of [constipation](#) can be successfully treated by instituting changes in diet and lifestyle – without the need for OTC or prescription drugs. This is the preferred approach and will lead to continued systemic health. Remember that **constipation is a warning sign from your body** to let you know that changes need to be made. Do not ignore this.

Natural Remedies for Constipation

There are many [natural laxative](#) and holistic treatments that can help treat **symptoms of constipation** and promote easier digestion, without the side effects commonly associated with OTC or prescription drugs. [Natural laxative](#) treatments that include herbal and homeopathic remedies can **restore balance and regularity to the digestive system and bowel**. Nourishing herbs such as Aloe Ferox, Taraxacum officinale (Dandelion), and Passiflora incarnata have [natural laxative](#) properties and also act as a tonic for the liver. Other herbs that may also have a beneficial effect on the digestive system are Psyllium, a natural bulk-forming [laxative](#), and Cascara and Senna to **stimulate bowel movements**. Remember to source your natural remedies from reputable companies to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety.

Complementary Therapies

- Acupuncture or shiatsu help to release blocked energy
- Aromatherapy massage with essential oils may help [chronic constipation](#)
- Biofeedback therapy teaches you how to coordinate muscles used to defecate

What are the Possible Complications of Constipation?

Most episodes of [constipation](#) result from a lack of fiber in the diet, a limited intake of water, and reduced physical activity. Complications such as hemorrhoids, a dependency on [laxatives](#), hernia, or a prolapse of the womb or rectum may be brought on by [chronic constipation](#).

Hemorrhoids

These are swollen veins around the anal opening that are caused by straining to pass a stool over a long period of time. They are extremely painful and may rupture and bleed. If they are large enough, they will be visible from the outside.

Dependency on [Laxatives](#)

People who abuse [laxatives](#) over an extended period of time have sluggish bowels.

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Hernia

A hernia is the bulging of the abdominal contents through a weak point in the abdominal wall. This is worsened by too much straining when trying to pass hard stools.

A prolapsed womb or rectum

A prolapsed womb or rectum may result from excessive straining and weakness of the muscles in this area.

Constipation in Infants and Children

Constipation is very common in infants and children. Babies who are formula-fed are far more likely to develop constipation compared to breast-fed babies. It is very rare for breast-fed babies to develop constipation, because breast milk is extremely easily digested and their stools are much softer. Bottle-fed babies, on the other hand, are much more likely to become constipated because the formula milk is harder to digest.

They also tend to have fewer bowel movements and their stools are thicker and greenish in color, compared to the soft, frequent mustard yellow stools of breast fed babies. A diaper rash or a small tear in the anus region may also make bowel movements painful. **To prevent constipation in formula-fed infants**, change their diet by including more fiber, increase their intake of water and fruit juices, or switch to a soy formula.

Children who are constipated tend to have hard or painful stools or no bowel movement for four days or more, and it is commonly due to a diet low in fiber, not drinking enough water, drinking too much milk or holding out to go the bathroom. A child with constipation tends to hold in their movements to avoid the pain, which in turn worsens the constipation, and so the vicious cycle continues. Severe, untreated **chronic constipation** can lead to physical problems with the digestive tract and the metabolic systems in the body.

To prevent **chronic constipation** in children, make sure they have a diet rich in fiber that includes whole grains, fresh fruit and vegetables and plenty of water and fruit juice to drink. Of course, exercise and physical activity are great preventatives, too!


Constipation and Pregnancy

Constipation causes much discomfort during pregnancy, and is very common. During pregnancy, the muscles in your intestines are more relaxed, causing the slowed passage of stools and constipation. The growing baby also adds pressure on the lower intestines in the last few months of pregnancy. There are other factors that contribute to constipation, such as an inadequate diet, certain supplements, hormonal changes, reduced activity and stress. By increasing more fiber and fluids to your diet and doing gentle exercise, you can **prevent and treat constipation**. If you are battling with **severe constipation during pregnancy**, your doctor may consider reducing your intake of iron-- but this can only be done under his or her supervision.



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How Can I Prevent Constipation?

There are various ways to prevent [constipation](#), and they include:

- Add high-fiber foods such as whole grain breads, bran cereal, dried fruit, raisins, fresh fruit and vegetables to your diet.
- Drink plenty of liquids such as water, fruit juices, hot tea or lemon water to stimulate the bowels.
- Ginger tea is an effective home remedy for [constipation](#).
- Regular exercise such as walking or swimming everyday can help to both prevent and relieve [constipation](#).
- Avoid regular use of [laxatives](#) or enemas.
- Avoid alcohol, caffeine, processed and junk food if you are suffering from [constipation](#).
- Stool softeners taken daily may also prevent [constipation](#).
- Increase your intake of magnesium by taking supplements or eating foods such as nuts, seeds or green leafy vegetables.
- Practice regular bowel habits by visiting the toilet for at least ten minutes after breakfast, even if you are unable to have a bowel movement. The best time is usually the first hour after breakfast. Done regularly, this will help to set up a healthy bowel routine.

The Natural Approach

While Western medicine has become the norm in many cultures, it is **not the only treatment option**. Conventional Western medicine (often called allopathic or orthodox medicine) is the system of medicine taught at most medical schools, and many pharmaceutical and synthetic medicines are manufactured and marketed according to the principles of allopathic medicine.

Because most of us in the Western world have grown up in a society in which allopathic medicine is the prevailing norm, we forget that only a few decades ago, homeopathic, herbal and other natural medicines were commonly available and freely used-- even by conventional doctors. While there are often heated debates about which system of medicine is 'better' than the other, many responsible doctors (whether they are allopathic or not) recognize that **both have a role to play in the treatment program**.

Natural medicine has often been frowned upon by conventional doctors, especially by those who do not have sufficient knowledge of these medicines. However, it is encouraging to note that some medical schools are now beginning to re-introduce it into their course work, thereby **providing doctors with a wider range of treatment options** from which to choose. In many countries, especially in Europe, India and China, **natural and homeopathic medicines are commonly prescribed** by conventional doctors and represent a significant part of the total annual drug sales.

Naturopathy is a branch of medicine (just as allopathy is a branch of medicine) which operates according to the underlying philosophy that the **body has an innate capacity to heal itself**. While natural medicines are often called 'alternative' or 'complimentary' medicines, they are, in fact, a **unique and independent form of medicine** in their own right, well able to **treat a variety of conditions**. Perhaps the term 'holistic' medicine is more apt, given the broad

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range of treatment options and approaches which are to be found within the practice of natural medicine. This encompasses many different disciplines, including herbalism, homeopathy, iridology, osteopathy, chiropractic, therapeutic massage techniques, aromatherapy, acupuncture and many, many more.

Most naturopaths will use a variety of treatment modalities in order to treat their patients in a **holistic way to support health, relieve symptoms and prevent future disease**. In fact, even the World Health Organization defines health as being "... more than simply the absence of illness. It is the active state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being." This is a wonderfully clear description of holistic or natural medicine, which strives to **support health** (thereby relieving or preventing symptoms), rather than simply eliminating disease.

Although allopathic medicine certainly has a role to play and has made a tremendous contribution to medical science during the past century, there is a growing perception that it is not the only answer. In many cases, **holistic medicine can accomplish just as much**, if not more – without the risk of side effects, addiction and sacrifice to health so commonly associated with pharmaceutical drugs. Contrary to common perception, and provided that they are manufactured in the correct way, **natural medicines can work quickly and safely to promote healing**.

In many cases, they can **succeed where pharmaceutical drugs have failed**. Despite frequent reports that they are ‘unproven’ and ‘untested’, the opposite is true. Natural medicines have a **long history of usage** and there is a **wealth of empirical evidence** to support their effectiveness and safety. In addition, active clinical research is carried out by many academic hospitals and universities to **support the extensive traditional and empirical evidence behind natural medicines**.

It is also important to know that, like any medicine, herbal and homeopathic medicines **must be manufactured in the correct way**, following acceptable procedures and manufacturing methods to ensure maximum effectiveness and safety. Due to the recent rise in popularity of natural remedies, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the market. Unfortunately, **not all of them are equipped to manufacture to the correct standards**, often resulting in a flood of inferior (and sometimes even unsafe) remedies onto the market – and giving natural remedies a bad name.

Even some pharmaceutical companies have rushed to claim their market share by producing so-called ‘standardized’ extracts of herbs and offering these as superior to the tried and tested methods of naturopathic manufacturing. Nothing could be further from the truth. While **‘standardized’ extracts** may offer benefit of easy consistency of dosage (and cheaper more efficient production lines), they have **grave disadvantages**, including an increase in side effects, as the medicines produced in this manner lose the natural protective properties of the herbs. In some cases, these side effects have proved fatal – as was seen in the liver toxicity associated with standardized extracts of kava kava, a herb previously safely used for generations without any known side effects.

Most naturopaths recommend what is called the Full Spectrum Method of extraction – which **retains the benefits of ALL the active ingredients within the herb** as opposed to isolating only one – thereby providing a more complete treatment as well as superior protection against side effects.



[Read more about the Native Remedies Full Spectrum Approach™](#)

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Whatever your choice, **always choose wisely**. Research what is best for you. If you have a chronic or life-threatening condition, don't make changes without first discussing them with your doctor, in order that your condition may be monitored. **Well-informed and supportive practitioners will support patients** who want to take responsibility for their own health.

Related Natural Remedies:

Natural Moves: Treats constipation naturally without the risk of side effects.

Natural Moves is a 100% safe, non-addictive natural herbal remedy formulated by our team of natural health experts in convenient tablet form. The herbs used in Natural Moves are specially selected to promote regular bowel movements and healthy digestion. It also acts as an effective liver tonic, therefore **safely addressing the health and functioning of the bowels and their role in routine waste elimination**.

While some traditional herbs are not suitable for regular use due to their excessively strong purgative effects, Natural Moves uses herbs that are **effective yet gentle** enough to promote regular open bowels through **promoting health in the digestive tract**.

Natural Moves can be used as part of a **gentle detox program** to safely cleanse and flush out the system and to **promote a healthy bowel movement when needed** in times of sporadic hardened stools – thus supporting the body's natural ability to remove toxins and waste by-products, **without harmful side effects**.

The formula remains true to the **full spectrum method** of herbal manufacture, ensuring the bio-availability and balance of all the active ingredients contained in the remedy. This method of manufacture also significantly reduces the likelihood of side effects and maintains all active ingredients in perfect balance – exactly as nature intended!

Natural Moves can also represent a wonderful start to any new program to stop smoking, or address healthy weight issues by **promoting normal, healthy stools-- thus cleansing and refreshing the digestion system** and removing waste from the body.

[Learn more about Natural Moves](#)

DigestAssist: Helps maintain digestive comfort and promotes healthy digestion.

Recognizing the need for a healthier and effective approach, Native Remedies has developed Gastronic Dr. and DigestAssist - both 100% herbal remedies containing well researched ingredients and manufactured in therapeutic dosage according to the highest pharmaceutical standards.

Gastronic Dr. is a capsule which is used every day for the continued health of the digestive tract and to **promote ongoing, healthy, trouble-free digestion**. Regular use of Gastronic Dr. safely and effectively acts to promote digestive health.

DigestAssist, the perfect companion to Gastronic Dr., comes in fast-acting and

convenient drop form, and can be taken as needed to promote digestive comfort after meals, helping you to enjoy your food every day.

These formulas remain true to the **whole spectrum method** of herbal extraction, ensuring the bio-availability and balance of all the active ingredients contained in the remedy. This method of manufacture also significantly reduces the likelihood of side effects and maintains all active ingredients in perfect balance – exactly as nature intended!

[Learn more about DigestAssist](#)

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