

CONSTIPATION

A relatively common condition
in adults and children

Signs

- Infrequent passage of stools (poo)
- less than 3 times/week or less often than your usual
- Passage of dry, hard stools, often accompanied by straining or pain
- Faecal leakage (overflow of poo), often mistaken for diarrhoea



Causes

- Not eating enough fibre
- Not drinking enough fluid
- Poor dietary intake
- Not enough physical activity
- Medications/Illness



When constipated you can feel full - try to eat little and often

Ideas to increase fibre

- Choose wholemeal, granary or half and half varieties of bread/rolls
- Use higher fibre breakfast cereals such as Weetabix, Shredded Wheat or Porridge/Ready Brek
- Choose wholegrain pasta, rice or mix some into the white varieties
- Eat more fruit and vegetables (aim for 5 portions a day) try raw vegetables, fruit salads, dried fruit or add extra vegetables to soups
- Leave skins on fruit, vegetables and potatoes
- Add beans and pulses to meals - try kidney beans, baked beans in chilli; chopped nuts in stir-fries; nut butter on sandwiches; lentils in soups, stews or curries
- Use wholemeal flour, oats, dried fruits and nuts in baking



NOTE: Fruit juices and smoothies contain only a very small amount of fibre





Fluids

Not drinking enough can lead to hard stools which are difficult to pass

- Normally recommended 6-8 cups per day
- Increase to 10 cups per day when constipated
- Water, diluting juice, milk, tea, coffee and soups (all count)
- Urine should be pale straw coloured - visit NHS Inform urine colour chart: www.nhsinform.scot/campaigns/hydration/



Physical activity (PA)

- Is important and helps to stimulate the bowel
- Aim for 150 minutes moderate intensity PA per week
- Reduce sedentary behaviour, for example when watching TV, playing computer games, phone, etc
- Chair exercises can be an option for those with limited mobility



Correct positioning for opening your bowels



Knees higher than hips

Lean forwards and put elbows on your knees

Bulge out your abdomen

Straighten your spine



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www.nhsggc.scot/hospitals-services/services-a-to-z/dietetics/

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