

Constipation information








1. What is constipation?

Constipation is when you find it difficult to do a poo, your poo is hard, or you don't go as often as you usually do. Sometimes you might do some poo but feel there is more there and won't come out, this is also constipation.

You might be constipated if you have any of the following:

- Do a poo less than 3 times per week
- Sit on the toilet for ages and cannot pass your poo
- Do your poo but feel there is more and won't come out
- When you do poo it is lumpy or hard

There is a chart to help us understand what constipation and doing your poo can look like. It is called the **Bristol Stool Chart**

	Type 1	Separate hard lumps	Severe constipation
	Type 2	Lumpy sausage like	Mild constipation
	Type 3	Sausage shape with cracks	Normal
	Type 4	Smooth soft sausage or snake	Normal
	Type 5	Soft blobs with clear cut edge	Lack fibre
	Type 6	Mushy consistency with ragged edges	Mild diarrhoea
	Type 7	Loose runny poo, liquid	Severe diarrhoea

2. Reasons for constipation:

There are many reasons for constipation. This can include all or some of the following list:

- If you don't eat enough fibre like fruit, vegetables, or whole wheat bread
- If you don't drink enough plain fluid like water
- If you don't exercise enough, you need to move every day
- If you ignore the feeling that you need to do a poo and don't go to the toilet
- If you change your usual routine or change what you eat
- If things are very busy in your life and you get stressed or anxious
- if you are feeling sick or poorly
- some medicines have side effects (anti-depressants and anti-psychotics)

3. What does constipation feel like:

- You are trying to go to the toilet and you cannot push out the large poo
- Bloating feeling in your tummy
- You may feel sick
- You can have pain in your tummy or back passage
- Emotionally you can feel anxious, depressed, afraid to leave home

4. Why you should not ignore constipation:

It can be very dangerous and painful to ignore constipation.

- It can make your gut twist and give you really bad pain
- It can make you feel very anxious and depressed
- It can be very serious and can cause someone to die
- It is important to tell someone if you feel constipated

5. Preventing constipation

- Eat a well-balanced diet with lots of fibre. Foods high in fibre are fruit, vegetables, baked beans, wholegrain breakfast cereals, wholemeal bread and pasta, brown rice, porridge and oats.
- Drink plenty of water every day. You should drink around 2 litres per day.
- Exercise regularly, at least 3 times a week. Different kinds of exercise can make your tummy muscles strong and make you feel fit. This will help you to do your poo every day.
- Try to go to the toilet to do your poo at the same time every day. The morning time after eating breakfast can be a good time to go.
- Make sure you sit properly on the toilet and give yourself time. Resting your foot on a low stool and having your knees just above your hips can make it easier to poo. See image below.

Correct position for opening your bowels



Step 1

Knees higher than hips



Step 2

Lean forwards and put elbows on your knee



Step 3

Bulge out your tummy
Straighten your back



Correct position

Knees higher than hips
Lean forward and put elbows on your knee
Bulge out your tummy
Straighten your back



6. Treating constipation

- Drink more water, eat lots of fibre and go for walks
- Massaging your tummy gently can help
- If you cannot go to the toilet for more than 3 days or more than it is usual for you, you need to tell someone. This should be your doctor or a staff member.