

Constipation – some articles and some suggestions for help from the Annie Appleseed Project

Don't do nothing as this is an unhealthy situation that you should take care of.

### **Women Twice as Likely as Men to Be Constipated**

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) Jan 02, 2001

About one in four adults say that they have suffered from constipation in the past 3 months, with women nearly twice as likely to report symptoms as men, according to a survey of Canadian adults.

About 40% of more than 1100 adults surveyed said they had been constipated at some point in the past year and 27% said they had been constipated in the past 3 months. About 13% of those people experienced constipation as a side effect of medication or a medical condition, according to the report in a recent issue of the American Journal of Gastroenterology.

Thirty-four percent of the subjects said they had visited a doctor for their symptoms and about one third reported using laxatives, the report indicates. When the researchers used a strict definition of constipation — classified as experiencing at least two of six symptoms — about 15% to 17% of the subjects had constipation.

Women, individuals who recently used antidepressants, and older subjects were more likely to seek help from a doctor, according to the report. *Am J Gastroenterol* 2001;96:3130-3137.

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Physicians Nicholas L. Petrakis and Eileen B. King of the University of California, writing in *Lancet*, have found that women who have two or fewer bowel movements per week have four times the risk of breast disease (benign or malignant). Dr. Petrakis also cited dietary considerations of interest to vegetarians, including the observation that the bowels of people who eat meat contain greater amounts of mutagenic substance than do the bowels of those who abstain from eating meat.

Also cited were observations that the intestinal bacterial flora of meat eaters include certain species that interfere with so-called glucuronide linkages necessary to complete the excretions of estrogen delivered to the gut in bile.

It is theorized by some that such "unlinked" estrogen's are reabsorbed in the large bowel of meat eaters, a circumstance leading possibly to higher estrogen levels and a greater change of cancer-producing effects. SOURCE: *Saturday Evening Post* (magazine), *Constipation and Breast Cancer*, 1982

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Regulating BM frequency might therefore have a role in the prevention of colorectal cancer. *British Journal of Cancer* (2004) 90, 1397-1401. doi:10.1038/sj.bjc.6601735 Published online 9 March 2004

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RESULTS: The **barley** intake significantly lowered plasma total and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol concentrations and reduced plasma triacylglycerol concentration.

Barley intake also increased stool volume. There was no significant difference in glucose tolerance between diet regimens.

CONCLUSIONS: This study demonstrated that barley intake has beneficial effects on lipid metabolism and bowel function and suggests that the intake of a high-fiber food, i.e., barley, should be recommended to prevent chronic diseases. Nutrition. 2003 Nov-Dec;19(11-12):926-9.

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Elimination – Ayurvedic tip:

**Amalaki** (Indian Gooseberry) helps regulate elimination by balancing Apana Vata, the downward flow of energy in the body. Thanks to <http://www.mapi.com>

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Numerous anecdotal reports have suggested that **kiwifruit** (*Actinidia deliciosa*) has laxative effects. This could be an acceptable dietary supplement, especially for elderly people who often present with constipation. Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition Volume 11 Issue 2 Page 164 - June 2002

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**Low Magnesium Intake and Low Intake of Water from Foods** May be Associated with Greater Prevalence of Functional Constipation

"Association between dietary fiber, water and magnesium intake and functional constipation among young Japanese women,"

Summary: In a cross-sectional study involving 3,835 Japanese women (aged 18-20 years) with relatively low intake of dietary fiber, results indicate that intakes of magnesium and water from foods may be independently inversely associated with functional constipation.

Thus, the authors of this study conclude, "Low intakes of water from foods and magnesium are independently associated with an increasing prevalence of functional constipation among a population whose dietary fiber intake is relatively low." Eur J Clin Nutr, 2007; 61(5): 616-22.

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Ann Fonfa, founder and president, Annie Appleseed Project:

I have been troubled by constipation most of my life. As an infant I had colic. My mother told me the doctor told her my stomach was underdeveloped.

Well, maybe that was the reason. In any case I spent a lot of time trying to go to the bathroom.

Here is what I have found that works:

- 1) Eat a kiwi, an apple (preferably not a sweet one) or a carrot by itself.
- 2) Drink 11 ounces of water first thing in the morning BEFORE urination.
- 3) Combine the water with massage of abdomen from lower right up under rib cage and down left side.

- 4) Poke fingers into any hard areas of your lower intestine.
- 5) Rub outside of upper thighs, both left and right side. When you find a tender spot, rub it more.
- 6) Do not be afraid to do a water enema if you have not gone in several days. (can add a garlic clove (with a knife cut) to the water, or a slice of lemon).
- 7) If you do enemas, buy yourself a bucket and catheter (small size), rather than an enema bag - it is SO much easier to use. I lubricate the red catheter tubing with castor oil. Never use that hard plastic tip that comes with the enema bag.
- 8) When you lie on your left side put a rolled up towel under your abdomen. It helps the internal movement. Remember things move through from lower right up under rib cage to go down the left side.
- 9) Drink a little more water daily and make sure you have healthy oil in your diet (flax oil, chia seeds, fish oil, olive oil, coconut oil).
- 10) Taking digestive enzymes may be helpful.
- 11) When on the 'throne', elevate your feet so that they are about 5-8 inches higher. It puts your body at a better angle for elimination (sort of the angle of squatting)
- 12) Chinese herbs or acupuncture may also help -consult a practitioner of Traditional Chinese Medicine (acupuncturist/herbalist) Homeopathy may help as well.

Good luck. None of these things are guaranteed to work all the time. But combining them or trying various methods has helped me a great deal.

AND a note from a woman who wrote in some years ago: "wanted to mention that miso (the 3 year fermented type sold in most health food stores--and also by the Kushi institute) contains probiotics which have been effective (for me) in preventing constipation. You might want to try them. I add miso to most soups after they are finished cooking, since they give an excellent flavor with a little saltiness. You don't want to boil them because it will kill the good bacteria."