

Digestion Protocols: Constipation



Constipation is a condition in which there is difficulty in emptying the bowels, usually associated with hardened feces.

Constipation can lead to other symptoms such as fatigue, brain fog, aches and pains, and headaches due to the buildup of toxins that get reabsorbed in the intestine as a result of stool sitting there for extended periods of time.

Constipation can lead to foul smelling gas as food wastes deteriorate or are acted upon by bacteria. It can also lead to bloating, gas, hemorrhoids, and anal fissures.

Evaluation

- ☐ Symptom survey
- ☐ Transit time
- ☐ Observation of size, consistency, and frequency of bowel movements
- ☐ Comprehensive Stool Analysis (CSA) for candida and parasites
- ☐ Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth (SIBO) hydrogen breath test
- ☐ Urinary indican
- ☐ IgG food sensitivity testing
- ☐ Tongue and facial markings diagnosis



Common Causes of Constipation

- ☐ Eating a diet low in fiber
- ☐ Inactivity -- not getting enough exercise
- ☐ Traveling or other changes in routine
- ☐ Eating large amounts of dairy products
- ☐ Being stressed
- ☐ Resisting the urge to have a bowel movement
- ☐ Resisting the urge to have bowel movements due to pain from hemorrhoids
- ☐ Overusing laxatives (stool softeners) that, over time, weaken the bowel muscles
- ☐ Taking antacid medicines containing calcium or aluminum
- ☐ Taking certain medicines (especially antidepressants, iron pills, and strong pain medicines such as narcotics)
- ☐ Pregnancy
- ☐ Low stomach acid
- ☐ Overeating
- ☐ Insufficient hydration
- ☐ Excess sugar or refined carbohydrates
- ☐ Food allergies and sensitivities
- ☐ Depression
- ☐ Eating disorders
- ☐ Ileocecal valve may be stuck in the shut position, which can cause food remnants to build up in the small intestine, causing bloating and pain
- ☐ Lack of good muscular action in the large intestine (peristalsis)

Lifestyle Habits to Improve Constipation

- ☐ Increase exercise
- ☐ Yoga, especially “child’s pose,” gentle yogic twist (pull knees to chest; twist to right/left)
- ☐ Stress management techniques; consider biofeedback techniques
- ☐ Crane exercises
- ☐ Abdominal massage
- ☐ Ileocecal valve manipulation
- ☐ Eliminating when the urge arises
- ☐ Evaluate medications
- ☐ Enemas
- ☐ Proper breathing technique
- ☐ Proper chewing and eating slowly



Dietary Habits That Can Improve Constipation

- ☐ Increase fiber intake
- ☐ Increase water intake (half the body weight in fluid ounces)
- ☐ Avoid hydrogenated and processed foods
- ☐ Eliminate dairy
- ☐ Eliminate gluten
- ☐ Soak prunes overnight and drink the water
- ☐ Increase mucilaginous foods, like flax, chia seed, and psyllium
- ☐ Flax seed oil (unheated) can be used in salad dressings
- ☐ Eat more garlic
- ☐ Increase probiotic foods like sauerkraut, kefir, and cultured vegetables

Herbs and Nutrients to Improve Constipation

- ☐ Aloe vera juice (2-4 ounces)
- ☐ Bentonite clay
- ☐ Black sesame seeds
- ☐ Buckthorn
- ☐ Castor oil
- ☐ Digestive enzymes
- ☐ Epsom salts
- ☐ Herbal laxatives: rhubarb, cascara sagrada, and senna when necessary
- ☐ Liver herbs
- ☐ Magnesium
- ☐ Marshmallow root
- ☐ Probiotics
- ☐ Psyllium
- ☐ Slippery elm
- ☐ Vitamin C
- ☐ Yellow dock