

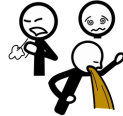


CONSTIPATION



What is constipation?

- Constipation is a symptom, not a disease.
- It happens when it is difficult to poop, when you poop infrequently, or when there is only a small amount of poop during a bowel movement.
- It affects both adults and children, and both men and women.



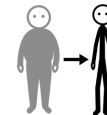
What are the causes of constipation?

- Eating low-fiber foods; having a low-fiber diet
- Doing little physical exercise
- Changes in habits (travel, new diet, schedule changes...)
- Not pooping when you feel the urge to go
- Overusing laxatives and taking medications without a prescription
- Use of certain medications
- Some medical conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), diabetes, stroke, or hypothyroidism



When should you see a doctor if you have constipation?

- If constipation starts suddenly
- If constipation does not improve with medication or changes in habits
- If you have severe abdominal pain, vomiting, or fever
- If you lose weight without a clear reason
- If there is blood in your stool



How to use a QR code to access health information

1. Open your phone's camera.
2. Point it at the QR code (that square with patterns).
3. Tap the message that appears on the screen.
4. It will take you to a page with safe and verified health information.





Recommendations to help relieve constipation

Go to the bathroom as soon as you feel the urge to poop. **Don't hold it in.**

Avoid:

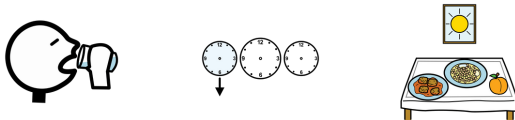
- Alcohol (it's best not to drink any)
- Tobacco (**if you smoke, ask your doctor for help**)
- Constipating foods (such as wine, hard-boiled eggs, tea, ultra-processed foods, cookies, toast...)



- Don't self-medicate. Some medications can cause constipation. Take only those prescribed by **your** doctor. Using laxatives without medical supervision may worsen the problem.
- **Eat slowly** and **chew each bite at least 20 times.**



- Drink enough water, especially before meals.



- **Exercise** for at least 30 minutes a day.
- **Try to poop at the same time every day**, preferably after breakfast.
- Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.



Eat more:

- Vegetables, legumes, and fruits (including unsalted, unseasoned nuts).
- Whole grains such as bread, pasta, rice, and oats.



- **Use a good posture when pooping.** You can raise your feet by placing a stool, a box, or a shoe box under them.



- Information verified by Dr. Juan Turnes, Digestive System Specialist at the University Hospital Complex of Pontevedra.
- Source of information: expertise of the medical specialists at the Hospital of Pontevedra. This material was created for the COMTA project, developed by the Research Group in Hepatology and IBD of the IIS Galicia Sur and the Digestive and Endocrinology departments of the Healthcare Area of Pontevedra and O Salnés.
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