

Constipation

Keeping hydrated and eating more fibre will help your bowels to function regularly. Make simple changes to your diet and lifestyle to improve or avoid constipation. Most cases of constipation resolve quickly, however if you have persistent constipation it is advisable to visit your GP.

- Consider what may have triggered constipation:** not enough fibre in your diet, side effects of medication and dehydration are common causes.
- Aim to drink at least 1.6 – 2 litres (6 – 8 glasses)** of fluid throughout the day to help keep your stools soft and easier to pass.
- Gradually increase your fibre intake** to avoid stomach cramps, bloating and trapped wind.
- Choose wholegrain or granary bread, pasta and rice** in place of white options.
- Opt for high fibre cereals** such as Weetabix, porridge or bran.
- Eat fruits and vegetables** to increase your fibre intake; sweetcorn, beans, lentils, prunes, dates or figs are particularly high in fibre.
- Choose high fibre snacks** such as dried fruit, nuts, seeds or oatcakes.
- See ‘Making Every Mouthful Count’ resource** for more information if you have lost weight or have a small appetite.
- Keep as mobile as possible** because physical activity can help ease constipation.
- Never ignore the urge to go!** Ensure you have enough time and privacy to pass stools comfortably.
- Laxatives** may be advised by your pharmacist or GP.
- Dietary and lifestyle changes may take up to 4 weeks to take effect.** Visit your GP for more support.



Tip: See the ‘Keeping Hydrated’ and ‘Hydration Boosters’ resources for more advice on how to improve your hydration status.