- Digestive system

Do you have chronic constipation?

Your permanent solution to relieving constipation

Manila Bulletin · 3 Sep 2025 · B-7 · CHESHIRE QUE, RND, RN, RD

How often do you move your bowels in a week? Is your stool hard to pass? Do you find yourself having to strain just to excrete your stool? Many people suffer from painful defecation just because they are constipated. Others even get flare-ups and hemorrhoids. This can be depressing or even scary for some, as it could affect one's mental state, daily activities, and productivity. If you are one of them, it is time to take charge of your bowel habits. Do not think that you will never find relief from chronic constipation because there is a solution to your problem. If the frequency of your bowel movement is less than three times a week or if the stool comes out hard and dry, then you are likely to be constipated.



We all know that we need to watch our water intake in order to keep well hydrated, to soften the stool, and make it easier to pass. However, if you are drinking enough water and still fail to move your bowels, take a look at some of the obstacles to better bowel movement.

You probably consume too much salt in your diet. Sodium absorbs water in the body. This will draw water away from the colon or large intestines, where the stool is formed. Thus, leaving the stool hard and dry.

You probably consume too much sugar from refined carbohydrates like white bread, crackers, cookies, cakes, pastries, chips, sugary beverages, candies, chocolates, ice cream, and other dairy products and the like. These do not just contain sugar but also fat. Sugar and fat both slow down digestion and affect the frequency of bowel movement.

Excessive intake of salt, sugar, and fat from ultra-processed food and fast food can cause constipation. Reflect on your daily food intake. Do you regularly eat canned or frozen processed meat? Hot dogs, luncheon meat, bacon, and the like are high in sodium and fat. Packaged instant noodles are refined carbohydrates added with too much salt and fat to prolong shelf-life and enhance flavor. Then there are the usual fast-food culprits—french fries, burgers, and soda. This combination may be an occasional treat, but if you make this your regular meal on most days of the week, then you are in for a battle in the bathroom. You don't need to look further than the quality of your food intake to know the real culprit behind your chronic constipation.

What is wrong with these ultra-processed food? Aside from having too much salt, sugar, fat, and additives, they lack the basic anti-constipation nutrient—fiber! This can only be found in plant food sources. Processing and ultra-processing methods, however, will strip the food of its fiber

content. For example, a potato is a plant food. Cooking it through boiling, mashing it before serving, will retain its fiber content. Eating potatoes in the form of chips, however, is not considered a wholesome source of fiber anymore.

If you wish to get rid of constipation, incorporate fresh fruits and vegetables into your daily staples. Snack on fresh fruits like bananas or starchy vegetables like boiled sweet potatoes instead of packaged snacks. During meals, make sure that you have a larger portion of vegetables compared to your meat, fish, chicken, or other animal meat sources. It is now time to make your main dish, vegetables, and the animal meat as a side dish.

There are two types of fiber. The insoluble fiber works like a broom inside the body. It cleanses the intestines of toxins. It absorbs water and facilitates the movement of stool. Unfortunately, some individuals who begin to eat more fiber-rich food tend to get constipated.

The main reason is that they tend to forget to drink lots of water. Fiber will never work its magic with constipation if water intake is inadequate.

The second type of fiber is the soluble fiber. This binds with excess cholesterol, fat and slows down the absorption of sugar in the body. Soluble fiber from oats, psyllium, banana, apple, and other fresh produce helps form stool. In fact, when you find yourself having diarrhea instead of constipation, soluble fiber will also help form the stool and control the passage of watery stool.

Here are some food that you can regularly add to your diet to help promote healthy bowel movement:

Banana and oats

These two food items are readily available, easy to prepare, and combine. Both contain insoluble and soluble fiber

Excessive intake of salt, sugar, and fat from ultra-processed food and fast food can cause constipation. Reflect on your daily food intake.

that will not only improve the motility or movement of stool in the colon but also serve as a prebiotic or food for the beneficial bacteria in your gut.

Psyllium husk

This comes in powdered form and must be mixed with water and consumed immediately. Otherwise, it will thicken and become difficult to drink.

Psyllium not only helps with bowel movement, but it also contains omega-3 fatty acids that are likewise found in oats. It helps with gut inflammation and lowering of fat and cholesterol in the blood. Excess cholesterol and fat are excreted through the stool.

Prunes and prune juice

This fruit contains a natural laxative called sorbitol. Three pieces of dried prunes or half a cup of prune juice a day may help alleviate constipation.

Lastly, drink pure wheatgrass regularly. Wheatgrass juice is packed with enzymes that promote proper digestion. It also has fiber that helps proliferate the good bacteria in the intestines. Having a robust gut microbiome promotes healthy bowel movement.

If all else fails, it’s time to have a consultation with your doctor. Some medical conditions, like hypothyroidism and gallbladder issues, can lead to constipation.

cheshireque@gmail.com