

CONSTIPATION

- Constipation is very common – one in seven people report symptoms of constipation.
- If you struggle to empty your bowels or you open your bowels infrequently, you may be constipated. Dry, hard and small pellet-shaped stools are another sign of constipation.
- Constipation can lead to stomach discomfort, nausea and fatigue.

All tied up?

Constipation can be caused by...

- **A lack of dietary fibre.** A special type of fibre called insoluble fibre absorbs water in your bowel and adds bulk to your stool. This is what keeps you regular – without enough insoluble fibre, you may become constipated.
- **Insufficient water intake.** You may be constipated if you don't drink enough water, even if your diet is high in fibre. Fibre draws water into your digestive tract and softens the stool. Without enough water, the bulk in your digestive tract will be hard and difficult to move.
- **Inactivity.** Exercise strengthens the muscles of your digestive system and gets them working, speeding up the transit time of the contents in your bowel.



Bristol Stool Chart
Stool types 3 and 4 are ideal.

Six tips to get things moving



1. Switch to wholegrains.

Rolled oats, brown rice and wholemeal pasta are higher in fibre than their refined white counterparts. Choose wholegrain options wherever possible.



2. Aim for two and five.

Fruit and vegetables are particularly rich in fibre, especially the skins – so throw away your veggie peeler! Your target is two fruits and five veg a day.



3. Try psyllium.

With more than 80% fibre, a little bit of psyllium goes a long way. Sprinkle a small amount over your cereal, add it to a smoothie or fold it through banana bread batter.



4. Opt for legumes.

Beans, chickpeas and lentils are high in fibre and super economical, so they're a win-win. Try baked beans for breakfast, a chickpea salad for lunch or dhal made from lentils for dinner.



5. Drink enough water.

Females should aim for eight cups a day, and for men, that quota is bumped up to ten.



6. Work on your fitness.

Your target is 30 minutes every single day. The more, the better.