



# Constipation



## What is constipation?



Constipation is a medical word for not being able to poo. This might happen because your poos have become too hard, dry or big.



When constipated you feel like you really need a poo but you cannot go. It is important not to push too hard as you can damage the muscles in your bum.



Healthy poos should be easy to push out, soft but not runny.



Constipation is very common but easy to avoid.

## How to recognise you are constipated:



When constipated you will probably:



- Have really bad tummy ache or a tummy that feels very full



- Feel sick



- Not want to eat or drink



- Feel poorly without knowing why



- Not have been for a poo as often as normal. Some people go once or twice a day; some people go every couple of days.

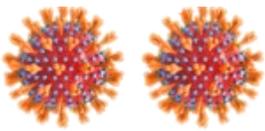
## Dangers of being constipated:



Poo moves from your tummy to your bum along your bowel. Your bowel is a very long tube inside you.



If you have not been for a poo for a while your bowel can become full and stop working properly.



This is because toxins or bad bacteria build up inside.



This can be dangerous and you will become very poorly. You might need to be taken into hospital.

## What to do if you are constipated:



If you haven't been for a poo for 5 days it is important to tell someone. You should tell a family member or your support worker / provider.



There are lots of different types of medicines you can buy from a pharmacy (chemist) that will help.



You can ask to talk to the pharmacist in private if you are embarrassed.



If the medicine hasn't worked after three days you should see your doctor. It is important to tell the receptionist why you are making the appointment.



## How to avoid being constipated:

It is easy to avoid becoming constipated by:



- Eating more fruit, vegetables and cereals

- Drinking more liquid during the day



- Exercising more



- Asking your doctor about possible side effects of any medication you are taking for example: paracetamol



You can talk to your local pharmacist (chemist), the NHS 111 service or your local Primary Care Liaison Team if you have any questions or would like some advice.