



How to prevent constipation.

Constipation can happen for many reasons. Some medications and illnesses may make it hard to get enough fibre and fluid each day. Fluid helps to soften your stool and makes it easier to pass. Fibre adds weight and size to your stool and helps to soften it. A bulky stool is easier to pass. Try the ideas below to help keep your bowels regular.

Eat plenty of high fibre foods

Foods high in fibre include grains, fruit and vegetables. If you start eating more of these foods, make gradual changes and drink plenty of fluid. If you start eating a lot more fibre quickly, or without drinking enough, it can make constipation worse.

Food group	Examples
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aim to include vegetables in as many meals as you can.• Try to include a range of colours of vegetables.• Add legumes (like split peas, lentils, or chickpeas) to soups or casseroles.
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eat fruit with the skin on where possible.• Add stewed or tinned fruits like pear, apricot and apple to cereals or your favourite dessert.• Drink 100% juice like pear or prune juice. One serve of juice is half a cup.• Eating two kiwi fruits a day can help.
Grain (cereal) foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eat breakfast cereals high in fibre such as bran, wheat biscuits and oats.• Add brown rice, barley and pasta to soups, stews and casseroles.• Choose wholegrains, multigrain or wholemeal breads.

Drink plenty of fluids every day

- Aim for at least eight glasses of fluid each day.
- You may need to drink more in warmer weather.
- Fluids include water, tea and coffee, juice and milk drinks. Soup also counts as a fluid.





Get active

- Being active will help to keep your bowels regular. Any movement you can do will help.
- If you are unsure about physical activities that are suitable for you, talk to your GP or an Exercise Physiologist. See the 'How to be physically active' and 'How much activity should I do?' fact sheets for more ideas.

Seek help if you need it

- There are over the counter medications that can help relieve constipation, such as laxatives and fibre supplements.
- See your GP or discuss with your pharmacist for individual advice before taking any over the counter medications.

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Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.

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