CONSTIPATION

By Julie Cottrell, MS, RD, LD

Constipation is a condition in which you may have: fewer than three bowel movements a week; stools that are hard, dry, or lumpy; stools that are difficult or painful to pass; a feeling that not all stool has passed. A fact sheet from the NIH can be obtained here. Use the information on this handout to learn options for improving your bowel pattern. Experiment to see what works best for you!

Medical News Today: 13 Home Remedies for Constipation

Excellent article which highlights 13 strategies that can help with constipation. Click the links to learn more about each of these items:

<u>Water</u>	<u>Fiber</u>	Exercise	Coffee		
<u>Senna</u>	<u>Probiotics</u>	<u>Laxatives</u>	Low FODMAP diet		
Magnesium Citrate	<u>Prebiotics</u>	<u>Prunes</u>	Avoid Dairy		
Eat shirataki noodles or take a glucomannan supplement					

Healthline: The 17 Best Foods to Relieve Constipation

Click on the link (above) or individual links (below) to learn more about specific foods that may be of benefit. It's interesting to learn about different characteristics of foods and their potential effects.

Food list includes:

prunes	apples	<u>pears</u>	<u>kiwi</u>	
figs	<u>citrus fruits</u>	spinach and other greens	kefir	
artichoke	<u>rhubarb</u>	sweet potato	<u>beans, peas, lentils</u>	
chia seeds	flax seeds	whole grain rye bread	<u>oatbran</u>	
Jerusalem artichoke and chicory				

- * These foods may help with constipation by: adding bulk, softening stool, decreasing gut transit time, and increasing stool frequency.
- Some items on the list are higher in carbs, so beware if you are on a low carb plan.
- Strategies you could use in order to include some of these items in a lower-carb diet:
 - > use these listed fruits as a dessert, after dinner, to decrease the impact on blood sugar;
 - > use any of these higher-carb items at only one meal per day, preferably in the evening when you are more "insulin sensitive".
- Mostly avoid the advice to use some of these ingredients by adding to baked goods and treats; making "junk food" in order to get more of any of these items in your diet is not a good plan!

FIBER AND CONSTIPATION: Does it really help?

Fiber is often cited as a sure way to relieve constipation. However, eating more fiber does NOT help everyone, and may even make matters worse for some. Read this article to learn more.

Healthline: Does Fiber Relieve or Cause Constipation? A Critical Look

Topics explored in this article:

- Fiber Is Generally Good for Digestion
- It Can Relieve Constipation for Many People
- In Some Cases, Eating More Fiber Makes Constipation Worse
- The Best Types of Fiber to Get Rid of Constipation
- Best Foods to Relieve Constipation

HYDRATION

Staying hydrated is important to prevent dry, hard stool. Water is the best option. See "Best Choices in Beverages" handout for other options. And check out this article below to learn more about hydration.

WebMD: How Drinking Fluids Can Help You Manage Constipation

INULIN (A type of dietary fiber)

Medical News Today: What to know about inulin, a healthful prebiotic

- Inulin is a type of dietary fiber.
- * Research has linked it to several health benefits, such as improving digestive health, helping control diabetes, and aiding weight loss.
- Plants naturally contain inulin, and some manufacturers add it to processed foods.
- Inulin may be purchased as a supplement in capsule or powder form.
- An example of a capsule form is **Zenwise** (right).





MAGNESIUM

- Various forms of magnesium may be helpful in treating constipation.
- * Magnesium citrate is commonly used.
- Magnesium oxide is another form that is becoming popular. Oxy-Powder (far right) is an example. An effective dose is likely 2 capsules. Here is a research article titled Magnesium Oxide in Constipation to learn more about this option.







Magnesium Citrate

Magnesium Oxide Oxy-Powder