

# GET SH\*T MOVING! CONSTIPATION GUIDE

Understanding Constipation & First Steps to Relief



**GUT  
HEALTH  
PROJECT**



Created by

**Chrystie Lee &  
Sean Robertson**

# CONTENTS

## Constipation 101

- How constipation affects your body
- Signs of constipation

## What Causes Constipation

- Diet & lifestyle factors
- Underlying causes

## Finding Relief

- Foods to help you poop
- Our go-to supplement protocol



**Chrystie Lee**

Registered Clinical Nutritionist  
& IBS Specialist



**Sean Robertson**

Gut-Brain Nutritionist  
& Metabolic Expert

*That's Us!*



### DISCLAIMER

The information in this guide is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. All content, including text, graphics, images and information, contained on or available in this guide is for general information purposes only. You should not use the information available in this guide for diagnosing or treating a health problem or disease. We make no representation and assume no responsibility for the accuracy of information contained in this guide, and such information is subject to change without notice. You are encouraged to confirm any information obtained from or through this guide with other sources, and review all information regarding any medical condition or treatment with your physician or health practitioner.

# Constipation 101

## Why does constipation matter and how does it affect your body?

Beyond the discomfort, bloating, and those oh-so-lovely hemorrhoids, constipation can have a serious impact on your overall health. Here's why it's more than just an inconvenience:

- **Hormonal Imbalance** – Excess hormones, like estrogen, are excreted through your stool. If you're chronically constipated, your body can't efficiently eliminate them, leading to hormonal imbalances.
- **Detoxification Blockage** – Your gut is a key pathway for eliminating toxins. When you're constipated, waste sits in your colon longer, allowing toxins to be reabsorbed into your body. This can leave you feeling sluggish, fatigued, and even contribute to skin issues.
- **Higher Risk of SIBO (Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth)** – Slow or infrequent bowel movements create the perfect environment for bacteria to overgrow in the small intestine, where they don't belong—leading to bloating, gas, and digestive distress.
- **Gas & Bloating** – When waste lingers in your gut, bacteria have more time to ferment it, producing excess gas that leaves you feeling bloated and uncomfortable.
- **Possible Weight Gain** – Sluggish digestion can increase calorie absorption, potentially leading to weight gain—even if your diet hasn't changed.

Constipation isn't just about how often you go—it's about how well your body functions. Understanding the root causes is the first step to finding lasting relief!

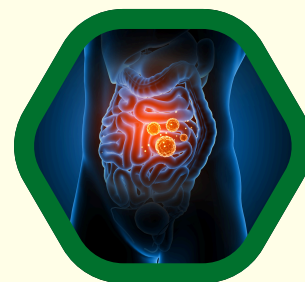


# Constipation 101

## How to Know What's Normal—and What's Not

Constipation isn't just about how often you go. You could be having daily (or even multiple) bowel movements and still be constipated! Here's what to watch for:

- **Frequency** – Going less than once a day? That's a sign of constipation. Even if you go multiple times a day but only pass small amounts, your bowels may not be fully emptying.
- **How It Feels** – Straining, pain, or discomfort while pooping—or spending more than 10–15 minutes on the toilet—are clear signs of constipation.
- **How It Looks** – Small, hard rabbit-like pellets or dry, lumpy stools indicate constipation. Check the Bristol Stool Chart below to see where you stand.



	Separate hard clumps (very constipated)	1
	Lumpy and sausage like (slightly constipated)	2
	A sausage shape with cracks in the surface (normal)	3
	Smooth and soft sausage (normal)	4
	Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (lacking fibre)	5
	Mushy consistency with ragged edges (inflammation)	6
	Liquid consistency with no solid pieces (diarrhoea)	7

# What Causes Constipation?

Pinpointing the cause of your constipation can be challenging, but it's essential for your long-term health. While targeted supplements (which you'll find in this guide) can provide quick relief, ignoring the root cause means digestive issues are likely to persist.

## Laying the Foundation

Before diving into the deeper causes of constipation, it's crucial to first look at diet and lifestyle factors. While chronic constipation is often more complex and may not be fully resolved by these changes alone, they form the essential groundwork for healthy, regular bowel movements in everyone and shouldn't be ignored!



**Water intake** - If you're chronically dehydrated, chances are you're also chronically constipated. Aim to consistently drink a minimum of 1.5L or 50 oz per day.



**Stress** - Learning how to better manage stress and regulate your nervous system is essential for proper digestion and bowel movements. This is due to the unique relationship between our nervous system and gut. More on this below.



**Exercise** - Regular exercise is important. Sedentary lifestyles are associated with increased risk of developing constipation. Aim to move your body for 30 minutes every day.



**Dietary fibre** - Fibre is crucial for regular bowel movements because it adds bulk to stool, making it easier to pass by absorbing water and facilitating smooth movement through your gut. Aim for 25-30g of fibre daily. Use our Fibre Cheat Sheet in this guide as a reference.



**Eating routine** - A regular eating schedule is important for bowel movements because it helps to maintain a consistent rhythm in your digestive system, allowing your body to anticipate when to process food and stimulate bowel movements at predictable times. Aim to eat three main meals daily, try to eat around the same time each day, and avoid fasting or skipping breakfast.

# What Causes Constipation?

## Underlying causes of constipation beyond diet and lifestyle factors

**Gut microbiome imbalance** - Your gut microbiome—the trillions of bacteria living in your digestive tract—plays a crucial role in keeping your bowels moving. When this delicate balance of good and bad bacteria is disrupted (a condition known as dysbiosis), it can directly contribute to constipation. Here's how:

### Reduced Short-Chain Fatty Acid (SCFA) Production

-Beneficial gut bacteria ferment fiber to produce SCFAs, like butyrate, which help stimulate intestinal motility. If dysbiosis reduces SCFA production, the gut slows down, leading to constipation.

### Impaired Bile Acid Metabolism -

Gut bacteria help regulate bile acids, which act as natural lubricants for stool. When dysbiosis interferes with bile acid metabolism, stool can become dry and difficult to pass.

### Inflammation & Gut Wall Dysfunction -

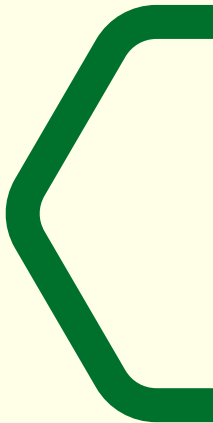
An imbalanced microbiome can lead to low-grade inflammation, affecting the enteric nervous system (your gut's built-in control center). This can slow down peristalsis—the wave-like muscle contractions that move stool through the intestines.

### Overgrowth of Methane-Producing Bacteria -

Certain bacteria, like *Methanobrevibacter smithii*, produce methane gas, which slows intestinal transit time. People with methane-dominant Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth (SIBO) often experience chronic constipation due to this effect.

### Altered Serotonin Levels -

Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that not only regulates mood but also plays a major role in gut function. About 95% of serotonin is produced in the gut, where it helps stimulate intestinal movement.



# What Causes Constipation?

## How Stress & Anxiety Contribute to Constipation

- **Stress Activates the “Fight or Flight” Response -**  
When you're stressed, your body shifts into sympathetic nervous system mode (fight or flight). This response prioritizes survival functions—like increasing heart rate and blood flow to muscles—while slowing down digestion. Since proper bowel movements require activation of the parasympathetic nervous system (rest and digest), chronic stress can keep your gut stuck in slow motion.
- **Reduced Peristalsis (Gut Motility) -**  
The enteric nervous system (often called the “second brain”) controls the wave-like muscle contractions (peristalsis) that move stool through the intestines. Stress and anxiety disrupt this system, causing sluggish motility and leading to stool stagnation and constipation.
- **Increased Cortisol & Dehydration -**  
Stress triggers the release of cortisol, a hormone that can draw water away from the intestines, leading to drier, harder stools that are more difficult to pass. Dehydration, combined with slowed motility, can make constipation worse.
- **Behavioral Changes & Suppressed Urges -**  
When people are anxious or overwhelmed, they may unintentionally suppress the natural urge to go, especially in unfamiliar or stressful environments (e.g., work, travel, or social situations). Over time, this can lead to dysfunctional bowel habits and worsening constipation.

### The bottom line

Chronic stress and anxiety don't just affect your mind—they significantly impact your gut health. Managing stress through breathwork, meditation, mindfulness, exercise, and nervous system regulation can help restore proper digestion and keep your bowels moving smoothly.



# Finding Relief

## Fibre Cheat Sheet

### What is Fibre?

Fibre is a carbohydrate found in plant foods that the body can't break down or absorb. It passes through the stomach, small intestine, and colon, while helping to support important processes in our body on the way.

### Why Fibre Matters

Fibre is an important part of a healthy diet for many reasons, including:

**Digestive Health:** Fibre helps prevent constipation by increasing the size and weight of stool, making it softer and easier to pass, and supports microbiome diversity by feeding the good bacteria that live in your gut.

**Weight Management:** Fibre can help you feel full and may help with weight loss.

**Blood Sugar:** Soluble fibre can help regulate blood sugar levels and prevent blood sugar spikes. This can help reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

**Cholesterol:** Soluble fibre can help lower cholesterol levels.

**Disease Prevention:** Fibre can help reduce the risk of developing a number of conditions, including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and some types of cancer.

### How Much Fibre Do You Need?

**Women: At least 25 grams per day.**

**Men: At least 30 grams per day.**

# Finding Relief

## Fibre Cheat Sheet

High Fibre Foods			
Orange	3g fibre/orange	Artichoke	6.9g fibre/artichoke
Kiwi Fruit	4.6g fibre/2 kiwi	Brussels Sprout	3.3g fibre/1 cup
Raspberries	3.5g fibre/0.5 cup	Lentils	13.1g fibre/1 cup
Banana	3g fibre/banana	Kidney Beans	12.2g fibre/1 cup
Apples	4.4g fibre/apple	Split Peas	16.3g fibre/1 cup
Blueberries	2g fibre/0.5 cup	Chickpeas	12.5g fibre/1 cup
Pears	5.5g fibre/pear	Black Beans	8.7g fibre/1 cup
Mango	5g fibre/mango	Hemp Seeds	2.4g fibre/2 TBSP
Edamame	8g fibre/1 cup	Flaxseeds	4g fibre/1 TBSP
Avocado	13g fibre/avocado	Psyllium Husk	4g fibre/1 TBSP
Carrots	2g fibre/carrot	Almonds	2g fibre/20 nuts
Green Beans	3.4g fibre/1 cup	Pistachios	2g fibre/20 nuts
Potato	2g fibre/potato	Walnuts	3g fibre/14 nuts
Sweet potato	3.8g fibre/potato	Sunflower Seeds	1g fibre/1 TBSP
Celery	2g fibre/2 stalks	Pumpkin Seeds	1g fibre/1 TBSP
Kale	1.5g fibre/1 cup	Tahini	4g fibre/2 TBSP
Spinach	1.6g fibre/1 cup	Chia Seeds	7g fibre/2 TBSP
Beetroot	3.8g fibre/1 cup	Linseeds	4g fibre/1 TBSP
Broccoli	2.4g fibre/1 cup	Hazel Nuts	2.8g fibre/20 nuts
Cauliflower	2.8g fibre/1 cup	Oats	16.5g fibre/1 cup
Collard Greens	7.6g fibre/1 cup	Quinoa	5.2g fibre/1 cup

# Finding Relief

## Fibre Cheat Sheet

Getting enough fibre isn't always as easy as it seems. You might think you're on track because you eat salads regularly, but to reach 30g of fibre, you'd have to eat 30 cups of romaine lettuce—not exactly practical!

Here's an example of what 30g of fibre looks like:

Example of Over 30g Fibre Per Day		
Meal	Food Item	Fibre
Breakfast	1/2 cup oats	8.25g
	2 kiwi fruit	4.6g
	1 tbsp chia seeds	3.5g
	1 scoop protein powder	
Lunch	1/2 cup quinoa	2.6g
	1/2 cup edamame	4g
	1 grated carrot	2g
	120g chicken breast	
Dinner	1 medium kumara	3.8g
	1 cup broccoli	2.4g
	1 tbsp pumpkin seeds	1g
	100g steak	
Snack	1 apple	4.4g
	14 walnut halves	3g
Total Fibre		39.55g

# Finding Relief

## Short-term supplement protocol

While addressing the root cause and building diet and lifestyle habits for regular bowel movements should be the priority for long-term relief, sometimes you need a reliable backup plan—something that provides quick relief when you need it most.

Magnesium and vitamin C act as osmotic agents, drawing water into the GI tract to soften and bulk the stool, making bowel movements easier to pass. Unlike traditional laxatives—which are often synthetic, irritating to the gut, and can lead to dependency—these nutrients support motility in a more natural way. Over time, reliance on laxatives can weaken the gut-brain connection, causing the digestive muscles to become sluggish.

While magnesium and vitamin C alone may not be enough to resolve severe constipation, when used together, they can be a valuable tool to keep things moving while you work on addressing the root cause.



**Magnesium**



**Vitamin C**

**Magnesium Citrate** - Best for daily use to keep your bowels moving without causing diarrhoea.

Start with 1-2 capsules (135mg per capsule) in the evening.  
If needed, take an additional 1-2 capsules in the morning.

**Buffered Vitamin C** - Buffered vitamin C is less acidic and better for sensitive guts.

Start with 1-2 capsules (500mg per capsule) in the evening.  
If needed, take an additional 1-2 capsules in the morning.

If these supplements are new to you, introduce each product separately and slowly to avoid or minimise any supplement reactions or symptom flares. We recommend discussing all supplements with your practitioner before introducing them to ensure they are right for you.

# THANK YOU FOR LOVING YOUR GUT!

We hope that this guides helps you to move one step closer to understanding your constipation and provides you with some short-term relief.

For more gut health guides, tips, and support on your journey, follow us on social media—we're always sharing valuable insights and tools to help you care for your gut from the inside out!

See you soon :)



[@guthealthproject](https://www.instagram.com/guthealthproject)



[Gut Health Project](https://www.facebook.com/GutHealthProject)



[www.theIBSprotocol.com](http://www.theIBSprotocol.com)

