

For more information or advice about constipation,
talk to your pharmacist or GP
You can also look at the NHS website.

The information in this booklet
has been clinically approved by
Bradford District Care Trust.



Printed and distributed by
Bradford District and
Craven CCGs.

CCGs working together
Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven CCG
Bradford City CCG
Bradford Districts CCG



This booklet was made by those who need accessible
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Understanding Constipation



An EasyRead Guide

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Most people go for a poo fairly regularly. It might be every day, or every other day.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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It doesn't much matter as long as you are healthy and poo at least three times a week.

But if that changes, and you go for a poo less often than usual, you might have constipation.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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Having constipation can be bad for your health, especially if you have epilepsy or heart disease.



Having constipation for a long time can be very serious. You need to get medical advice if you are constipated for more than 2 weeks.



If you are still constipated after a couple of weeks, tell your GP.



They might be able to give you different medication or send you for a check up.



And if you find blood in your poo at any time, tell your GP straight away.



It's probably nothing to worry about, but it's best to get it checked out.



If you are going for a poo less often than normal or you haven't had a poo for 7 days, go and see your pharmacist.



You can ask to go to a private room to tell them about your symptoms.

















They will be able to suggest medication to get things moving.



They will make sure that this medication is safe to take with any medication you are already taking.

Poo comes in many shapes and sizes!

Bristol Stool Chart

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)	
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy	
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on the surface	
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft	
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges	
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool	
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces. Entirely Liquid	

If your poo is like Type 1 or 2, you might be constipated.

Poo that is like Type 3, 4 or 5, can be normal and healthy.

If your poo is like Type 6 or 7, you probably have diarrhoea. If you have diarrhoea for more than 2 weeks, talk to your GP.

How do I know that I have constipation?



Going for a poo less often than you usually do.



Finding it hard to go for a poo, and having to strain to go.



Poo that is dry, hard and lumpy like Type 1 or 2.

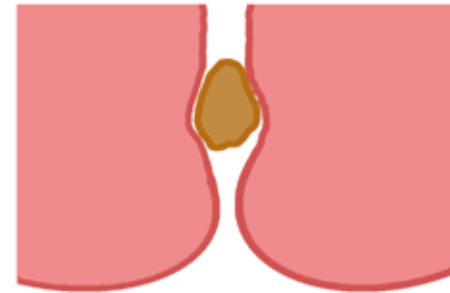


Pain or cramps in your stomach.



Losing your appetite and feeling bloated.

Overflow Diarrhoea



If you don't have a poo for a long time, a hard lump of poo can get stuck in your bowel. This can be hard to shift.



Runny poo from higher up your bowel can't get past. When pressure builds up, it will force its way past the blockage. This is called overflow diarrhoea.



If you suddenly get diarrhoea after having had constipation, see your doctor.



Some types of medication for conditions like epilepsy or high blood pressure can make you constipated. Some painkillers do too.



If you are constipated check with your pharmacist whether your medication could be causing it or making it worse.



If so, talk to your GP. They might change your medication or add a laxative to help you to poo more easily.



Don't just stop taking the medication.

How to avoid getting constipated



Drink plenty of fluids. Water is best, but tea, coffee, soft drinks or milk are all fine. This will help to make your poo soft.



Get regular exercise. Try to do at least half an hour every day.



Even gentle activity such as housework, walking, dancing or gardening will help keep things moving.

How to avoid getting constipated



Make sure you eat plenty of fibre.



Fruit and vegetables are good ways to get fibre, especially if you eat the skins.



Eat wholemeal bread, rice, pasta and cereals when you can.



Nuts and seeds are another good source of fibre.

If you find it hard to go for a poo, there are some things you can do to help.



Try to go for a poo at the same time every day. Get into a routine.



Try having a hot drink and something to eat about half an hour before you try to do a poo.



It can be easier to have a poo if your feet are raised up. Try putting a washing up bowl or something similar under your feet when you sit on the loo.



Some disabled toilets have a very high seat. This can make it hard to get in a good position.