



ARE YOU CONSTIPATED?

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Constipation is common and harms health. It is commonly defined as “less than one bowel movement per day” but if you have a daily movement that is dark, hard, pebbly, or difficult to pass, you are also constipated. If so, you’ll be glad to know that combining acupuncture and enzymes or herbs can often relieve even very chronic cases.

Why does constipation harm health? Constipation indicates that the bowel is not moving waste through fast enough. Waste which remains in the bowel permits toxins to enter the blood stream. Long-term constipation alters the elasticity of the large intestine, encourages polyps, hemorrhoids and anal fissures.

What are the symptoms? The first is: too few bowel movements. Along with this simple symptom are other symptoms, such as bloating, gas or cramps, a bad taste in the mouth, heartburn, perhaps acne, headache, fatigue, irritability, even dizziness and ringing in the ears. Women who are constipated are more likely to suffer from PMS and menstrual cramps.

How does one get constipated?

a) The commonest way is by eating a diet that is too low in fiber--too few fresh vegetables and fruits, nuts and seeds, whole grains, or beans and lentils. You can heal this kind of constipation simply by increasing your use of fiber. Do this yourself: (1) eat greens at least 3x per week. Greens include spinach, chard, collard, kale, turnip, & mustard greens; lettuce is *not* a green—it’s crunchy water. (2) eat figs or prunes, or drink prune juice, to help move the bowels. Four oz of juice, or 1-4 dried fruits is usually enough, and do this daily until you have regular bowel movements.

b) Strangely enough, some people get constipated if they consume too much fiber! These people are usually vegetarians who are allergic to wheat, dairy or soy, or have too much sugar fermenting in their bowel. Clearing sugar from the bowel and improving protein intake often helps, and doing allergy elimination can also help.

c) It is also possible to become constipated by not drinking enough water.

d) A number of pharmaceutical drugs slow the gut and cause constipation.

Does acupuncture help? Does enzyme supplementation help?

Yes, and Yes! Certain acupoints are specific for alleviating constipation, bloating, and gas. Certain enzyme combinations help the large intestine move more regularly, relieve gas, and cleanse toxins. Combining acupuncture and enzymes or herbs can often relieve even very chronic cases of constipation.

What about allergies?

I usually test for allergies in anyone complaining of digestive discomfort. Finding the offending substances and “clearing” them helps prevent future constipation.