

## Constipation

### Symptoms

Following are the signs that indicate the presence of this ailment:

- No bowel movements at least once a day
- Pain in the abdomen
- Heaviness in the stomach
- Wind formation
- Mucus coated tongue
- Headache
- Loss of appetite
- Pain in the lower legs
- Hypertension, fever
- Nausea
- Vertigo
- Palpitation
- Drowsiness

### Causes

The aggravation of vata causes constipation. Improper eating habits including eating a lot of food, eating food which is difficult to digest (such as meat) and not eating enough vegetables and salads also lead to constipation.

Irregular sleeping habits or emotional disturbances (stress, grief, fear or worry) are other causes for the obstruction of the passage of stool, accumulation of toxins in the colon or excessive stimulation of the nervous system.

Smoking, consuming too much tea and coffee, or intake of prescription or illicit drugs can also cause constipation.

### Remedies

Drinking a glass of warm milk before going to bed helps in easy evacuation in the morning. In case of severe constipation, mix two teaspoons of castor oil in the milk.

Drink one liter of warm water and walk around for a few minutes immediately after waking up early in the morning.

Drinking lemon juice mixed with warm water two to three times a day eases constipation.

One or two teaspoons of aloe gel can be taken twice a day.

A common Ayurvedic medicine for constipation is Triphala Churna. It is a powder made by grinding three kinds of herbs. A teaspoon of this powder taken with warm water or milk at the time going to bed is beneficial.

### Dos and don'ts

The diet taken during constipation must be easily digestible.

Plenty of fruits, vegetables and salads

Freshly cooked food, and chew food thoroughly.

Eat only when hungry and maintain at least 4 hours between meals.

Use spices like cumin, coriander, turmeric powder, fennel and asafetida as they make the food easy to digest.

Whole grain bread and cereals

Regular physical exercise is also important for maintaining proper bowel movements.

Sleeping hours should be regulated and efforts should be made to have a sound sleep.

Fried foods, beans, gas forming vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli, nuts and dried fruits should be avoided.

Do not mix too many kinds of foods in one meal