

**Life Begins With a Breath®**  
**The Chinese Medicine Guide to Health**  
Courtesy of the Goodman Wellness Center

## **Constipation**

Oh, that 12-letter word. Really it is the four-letter word that children like to use and that people avoid talking about: poop. Today we'll just stick to that 12-letter word constipation.

### **What is constipation?**

As defined by Stedman's Medical Dictionary, constipation is bowel movements that are infrequent and/or incomplete. Stedman leaves a lot of room for interpretation. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) defines constipation as not having a daily bowel movement; by the type of stool -- whether it's dry and small; or by the inability to clear the intestine even if the stool is soft.

### **How many times should I go per day?**

The down and dirty basic amount would be one good stool per day. There has been much controversy over the years about this question. Some have said from one to four times; some have said after each meal; but due to diet, genetics and environmental factors it is hard to say which is best. A person who consumes more fruits and vegetables typically will go more times throughout the day than a meat-and-potatoes eater.

### **Does it matter if I am suffering from constipation?**

Absolutely. Constipation can create a whole heap of problems within the digestive system. Bloating, abdominal pain, acid reflux (heartburn) and hemorrhoids are just some. Intestinal polyps, diverticulitis and even cancer can all develop from chronic constipation.

### **So if I miss one day, am I in trouble?**

No, one day is fine. In fact many people suffer from mild constipation when they travel or even on the weekends when their routine has changed.

### **What are some of the causes of constipation?**

In terms of TCM there are several contributing factors: Diet, stress, exercise, age and genetics are the major causes.

## **Stress Can Cause Constipation?**

Oh yes. Stress is one of the leading causes of constipation. Some of the diagnosis for stress-induced constipation would be small, hard, dry and round stools. Some other non-stool related indicators would be headaches, red eyes, irritability, frustration and shortness of breath (or frequent sighing).

### **What are some treatments for constipation?**

1. **Acupuncture**: very effective for both digestive difficulties and stress
2. **Chinese Herbal Medicine**: they don't taste good and you might gag a little, but worth it
3. **Abdominal massage by a licensed therapist**
4. **Dietary changes**: To combat food allergies, too much processed foods or not enough fruits and veggies
5. **Exercise**
6. **Enemas**: for the short term
7. **Chiropractic care**: a pinched nerve could be the cause

### **Acupuncture can help?**

Oh yes. Acupuncture is very effective at treating both chronic and acute constipation. In fact, acupuncture is so effective it may only take one to three treatments to get the bowel movements going.

### **Will I have to take herbal medicine?**

Not all cases require Chinese herbal medicine, but it is also very effective. The herbal medicine is usually used with stubborn constipation and to solve some of the underlying issues related to what is causing the problem. The goal is to get patients' bodies to change so that they will not suffer from constipation in the future.

## **Are there any home remedies?**

Yes there are, here are a few:

- 1. Carrot and prune juice**
- 2. More fruits and veggies**
- 3. Dates**
- 4. Unfiltered apple juice**
- 5. Essential fatty acids**
- 6. More water**
- 7. More fiber like oatmeal**
- 8. Coffee (it works for some)**

## **Acupressure to Stimulate the Bowels**

Here are a couple of points that are *very effective at stimulating the bowels*. They should be done with equal pressure on both sides of the body (left and right) two times per day for about 1-2 minutes.

*Acupressure* takes a little longer to work so patience is required.

### ***The Points:***

**St-25:** It is located just lateral to your belly button about one to two inches. Use your index or middle finger to locate the tender spot. Press and hold for 10-15 seconds and then vary the pressure with circular movements for the duration of the two minutes.

**St-37:** It is located about two inches above the middle of the lower leg. The best way is to use your fist and massage just lateral to your shinbone. Start in the middle of the leg and work your way up to the knee. Wherever there is pain spend a little more time in that area.

***Good Luck! If you are still suffering from infrequent stools please call Steven Goodman L.Ac. at 949-460-9378.***

## **Fruit Salad with a Twist**

How can you start summer without a good fruit salad? This one will curb even the chocoholic's desire to reach for the chocolate. Well, maybe.

### **The Recipe:**

- 1 banana
- 1 orange
- 1 apple
- ¼ slice of lemon
- 1 tablespoon of honey
- 1 tablespoon of cinnamon

Skin and slice the banana, orange and apple. Squeeze the lemon wedge over the top and add the cinnamon and honey. Stir and serve. It is a very simple recipe, but one you may desire the next day and the next. **Ummm good!**

**Try to keep cool and have a great summer. If you, a friend or a family member has any questions related to this newsletter please give Steven Goodman L.Ac. a call at 949-460-9378.**