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Dr. Brenda Watson,  
Naturopathic Doctor  
and Colon Therapist

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# Constipation is a Serious Health Concern

# STOP

Learn how to vastly improve your  
health and reduce the risk of disease  
through proper elimination

By Brenda Watson, N.D., C.T.





## My name is Brenda Watson.

I am a Naturopathic Doctor, a Colon Therapist and President of the International Association of Colon Therapy. After almost two decades of clinical work focusing on the digestive system, I know that constipation is a serious health issue that should not be ignored. The problems that result from constipation can range from fatigue to depression to serious diseases of the colon.

# Constipation

No one wants to talk about it, admit to it, or take the necessary steps to relieve it until the situation becomes critical. According to the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology, approximately one million Canadians a year suffer from constipation (<http://www.cag-acg.org/patinfo/constipation.htm>, 04/05/2005). What makes this statistic so alarming is that this is using conventional medicine's definition of constipation (approximately 1 bowel movement every 2-3 days). When one considers that we should be having 2 to 3 bowel movements per day for optimal health, this number is significantly higher.

If you suffer from constipation, you want a permanent solution to this problem. Fortunately, there are immediate, natural measures that can help relieve your constipation difficulties. It is imperative to take immediate action as constipation has many damaging effects on the body including:

- raising your risk of colon cancer (Watanabe et al., 2004)
- being 4 times more likely to develop breast cancer (Petrakis & King, 1981).
- causing pressure in the bowels which can stimulate the growth of cancer cells (Walsh et al., 2004).
- causing psychological distress, anxiety, depression, insomnia and sexual dysfunction (Tan et al., 2003).
- causing auto-intoxification (when toxic substances are absorbed from the bowels into the bloodstream). Auto-intoxication has been blamed for a long list of health problems, including depression and serious skin problems (Person & Bernhard, 1986).

Healthy bowel movements are essential to a healthy body. The bowel is like a sewage system, unless we cleanse the system of toxins daily, they will enter the blood stream and harm the body.

Small children generally have natural, easy bowel movements; food goes in and waste comes out. As we grow older, our bowel habits become regulated by school bells, work schedules and travel schedules. Ignoring the urge in order to fit bowel movements into your schedule is the first step in creating lifelong bowel problems. According to conventional medicine, regularity of bowel movements is individual: one person may experience three movements a day, while another may experience 1 every 3 days.

However, natural health practitioners know that the bowel is the foundation of good health and having 2-3 bowel movements daily is important in keeping not only the bowel, but also the body, healthy.



Conventional medicine defines constipation in relation to the frequency of bowel movements. But those who suffer constipation often describe their complaints differently;

- Dry, hard or lumpy stools
- Straining to have a movement
- Incomplete elimination or feeling like you still need to go
- A sense of difficulty in passing a stool
- Hemorrhoids

## How does Constipation create poor health?

Constipation slows down the transit time of food through the body. This is the amount of time it takes for a meal to

enter the mouth and the remains to exit the rectum. This should be less than 24 hours. Slow transit time becomes a problem, as putrefied (toxic) materials stay in the colon longer, allowing toxins to enter the bloodstream through the intestinal wall. This is called auto-intoxification and can lead to many different states of disease, from headaches to autoimmune disorders. Additionally, slow transit time can lead to a build-up of toxic material along the intestinal walls. This build-up reduces the absorption of good nutrients. Malabsorption deprives the body of nutrients that are needed for energy and vitality. This is why so many people with constipation complain of fatigue and depression.

## What are the signs of good elimination?

### STOOL COLOUR

Generally, the stool should be walnut brown. You may experience temporary dis-colouration, if you eat certain foods such as beets or dark green vegetables.

### CONSISTENCY AND LENGTH

Stool should have a consistency similar to toothpaste and the length of a banana. Many people produce small, hard, pellet like fecal matter. This is not healthy. Insufficient daily intake of water and fibre are key contributors to improper consistency and length.

### FREQUENCY

At minimum, you should have one good bowel movement per day, but 2 to 3 is ideal for optimum health.

### GAS AND ODOUR

Gas is the natural by-product of digestion. However, an abundance of gas is not normal, nor should it be foul smelling.

### SINK OR FLOAT

Normal healthy stool should leave the body easily, settle in the water and gently submerge. If there is not enough daily fibre in the diet (30 to 40 grams), the stool will quickly plummet to the bottom of the toilet. If the stool floats, the likely reason is too much undigested fat.

## What causes Constipation?

There are many different factors that can lead to a constipated colon. Generally it is a combination of unhealthy lifestyle choices, which ultimately results in constipation.

### DIET: Canadians have a love affair with C.R.A.P.

Forgive the pun, but the fact is that Canadians love;

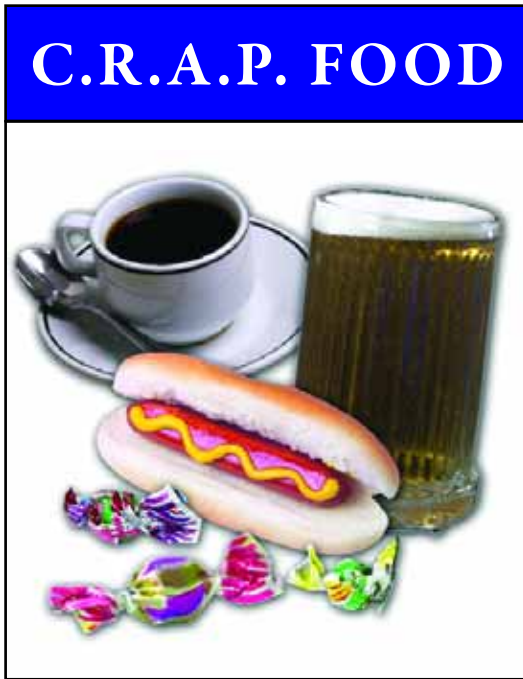
*Coffee*

*Refined sugars and starch*

*Alcohol*

*Processed food*

Growing up on a diet of low fibre and an abundance of processed foods sets the stage for constipation. Even those that changed their diets as adults will need to retrain their elimination system, and this can take time. Additionally, Canadians do not consume enough Essential Fatty Acids (EFA's), which are only found in raw nuts and seeds, and fish. Oils from these natural sources contain EFA's that are required daily for lubrication of the intestinal system. Sadly, most Canadians do not supplement their diets with these essential nutrients either.



**LACK OF EXERCISE:** A study in Germany found a reduction in symptoms of constipation among women who engaged in frequent physical activity (Blanke et al, 2001). While a study in Japan found that walking, along with dietary fibre helped maintain regular bowel function (Nakaji et al., 2002). Exercise stimulates lymphatic flow, which can help create normal peristalsis. This is essential to produce 3 bowel movements per day. Unfortunately, most Canadians do not get enough exercise.

**MEDICATIONS:** Many medications can cause constipation including; anti-depressants, pain medications, antacids, diuretics, cholesterol lowering drugs and antibiotics.

**CHANGES IN ROUTINE:** When your normal daily activity is altered the bowel can become constipated (ex. frequent travel, sickness, etc).

**LACK OF TIME:** It may sound strange, but many of us do not create the time to eliminate regularly. How many of us get up in the morning, grab a cup of coffee and head out the door in a rush to work? Sometimes, a slight urge to eliminate will be felt, but that urge is ignored as we are "too busy" to act upon it. Over time, this reduces the natural urge to eliminate, and the urges become less frequent.

## How do I achieve 2 to 3 bowel movements per day?

Dr. Leonard Smith, MD responds:

It is unlikely that a doctor has explained how to achieve optimal elimination (2 to 3 bowel movements per day). This is probably due to the discomfort experienced in discussing the subject. My comfort in having an open dialogue about elimination is due to the amount of discomfort and serious disease I have seen in patients who experience constipation. The formula for healthy bowel movements is quite simple. It is a program comprised of three simple steps;



**1. PERISTALSIS/HYDRATION:** To achieve 2 to 3 bowel movements per day, the peristaltic action of the bowel must be regular and the colon must be properly hydrated. Peristalsis is the natural muscular movement of the colon. When functioning normally, peristalsis moves food through the digestive system in less than 24 hours.



Constipation is often caused by dehydration. The key to hydrating the colon is to drink plenty of water. Some people require extra support, and can use hydrating minerals such as magnesium hydroxide. While many "natural" products use herbal laxatives (like cascara sagrada and senna), these are purgative herbs, which can be dangerous for your body if used for extended periods of time. Although better than being constipated, I do not suggest using them as they can be habit forming and do not restore the colon's independent ability to function properly. Cascara sagrada, senna and other purgative herbs work by irritating the colon, causing it to expel its contents. Hydrating the colon and using gentle herbs which promote peristalsis to occur naturally (such as cape aloe and rhubarb) is a far better solution.

**2. BULK:** The colon requires bulk in order for it to move 2 to 3 times per day. Optimal intake of fibre should be between 30 to 40 grams per day. However, it is critical to ingest the correct type of fibre.



There are two main types of fibre; soluble fibre and insoluble fibre.

- Insoluble fibre has a cleansing effect (like a scrub brush) removing toxins and old hardened material from the intestinal wall by 'scraping' them off as it passes by. It also works to tone the bowel.
- Soluble fibre works by absorbing toxins as it passes through the intestinal tract (similar to a sponge).

Both types of fibre are required to combat constipation. This is different from most fibre supplements on the market which are psyllium based. Psyllium is 97% soluble fibre, which can be highly constipating for some people. Psyllium can be constipating because it absorbs 40 times its weight in water. When you take psyllium, it can absorb most of the free water in the colon, which leaves the colon dehydrated. This is why so many people become constipated when they



use a psyllium based fibre supplement. Flax based fibre supplements provide a balanced ratio of fibre. This gives the user the benefits of both soluble and insoluble fibres; absorbing toxins and creating proper bulk in the colon without dehydrating it.

**3. LUBRICATION:** To achieve 2 to 3 bowel movements per day, lubricating the colon is critical in providing a smooth and gentle elimination. The body uses essential fatty acids (EFAs) to lubricate the colon. They are called essential as these oils can only be obtained through the diet (raw nuts, seeds, and fish). EFAs are vital to many different processes in the body including manufacturing every cell wall in the body. They ensure we have soft and healthy skin, (not only our skin on the outside but also our 'internal skin' the intestinal lining). If you are not eating raw nuts or seeds, or cold water fish every day, you need to be supplementing with an EFA supplement. As fats are difficult to digest, it is important to use an EFA product which contains lipase. Lipase is the digestive enzyme that is required to breakdown fats and oils so they can be used effectively by the body.

These three steps; peristalsis/hydration, bulk, and lubrication, are a simple system that will result in proper daily elimination. In addition to these steps, here are some helpful hints that also help create the proper environment for regular elimination:

- ✓ Drink plenty of water.
- ✓ Change your diet slowly, adding more fruits and vegetables, (organic whenever possible). Lower the amount of refined starches, sugar and processed foods in your diet.
- ✓ Take digestive enzymes with your meals.
- ✓ Exercise! At least 3 times per week for 30 minutes.
- ✓ When traveling, try to maintain a normal diet and regular sleep schedule.
- ✓ Create time to go to the bathroom in the morning, even if it means getting up a little earlier than usual.
- ✓ Position yourself correctly when using the toilet. Keep the feet raised on a telephone book or a device designed for proper eliminative posture (knees above the waist).
- ✓ Cleanse bi-annually using herbal combinations designed to support overall body and intestinal detoxification.
- ✓ Use colon hydrotherapy.

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# The Constipation Solution

## 30 Day Advanced Cleanse System

"Unfortunately, the problem of constipation builds up slowly over time, and takes time to improve if it is not supported by a specific program for success. As a Naturopathic Doctor, I have studied the effect of augmenting good dietary and exercise habits with natural supplements in order to put a sluggish colon and digestive system on the right track. I have formulated what I consider to be, the most effective program for achieving 2 to 3 gentle bowel movements per day and for improving the overall condition of the colon. This program is based on peristalsis/hydration, bulk, and lubrication in the colon. The 30 Day Advanced Cleansing Program of CleanseSMART, FibreSMART, and OilSMART is the most advanced and effective cleansing formulation available." - BRENDA WATSON N.D. C.T.



### STEP 1: PERISTALSIS/HYDRATION

CleanseSMART is a 30 day advanced cleansing program. It does not include any purgative herbs (such as cascara sagrada or senna, which can be addictive and cause damage to the colon over time). Instead it includes magnesium hydroxide, which hydrates the colon by bringing water to the bowel. It also includes peristaltic herbs such as cape aloe, rhubarb and triphala. Together they work towards providing 2 to 3 bowel movements per day.

CleanseSMART not only helps with constipation, but it also includes herbs to stimulate cleansing and detoxification through the bodies 6 other channels of elimination (liver, lungs, kidneys, lymphatic, blood and skin). This is extremely important for those who have been constipated, as it is likely they have toxicity throughout the body due to years of poor elimination.



### STEP 2: BULK

FibreSMART is a flax based fibre formula for daily use. FibreSMART is approximately 50% soluble fibre and 50% insoluble fibre. This is the proper ratio, in that it will not swell and dehydrate the colon like psyllium, but will help to absorb and sweep toxins out of the body through regular elimination. I recommend FibreSMART to be taken with CleanseSMART, as well as for maintenance afterwards.



### STEP 3: LUBRICATION

OilSMART is a patented blend of Organic Flax, Borage, and Fish oils that contain the ideal ratio of essential fatty acids. It also contains the digestive enzyme Lipase. Lipase is used by the body to ensure the proper breakdown and utilization of fats in the body. This blend of nutritional oils will help to lubricate the colon, allowing for increased bowel movements. It is recommended that you use OilSMART, with CleanseSMART, as well as for maintenance afterwards.