

TREATING CONSTIPATION

Made for Oakville Pelvic Health
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WHAT YOU CAN DO

1. Eat balanced meals at regular times of the day.
2. Ensure adequate fluids.
3. Ensure adequate fibre, especially soluble fibre with every meal.



Figure 1: The Healthy Plate Model



Figure 2: The difference between soluble and insoluble fibre - By the Healthy Food Guide team

GET STARTED RIGHT AWAY

Eating balanced meals at appropriate times of the day and ensuring adequate fluids are the basics of treating and preventing constipation.

STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO BALANCE YOUR FOOD INTAKE

1. A balanced diet should consist mainly of vegetables, fruits, good quality whole grains and plant-based proteins such as nuts, seeds and legumes.
2. Meals should be eaten within 1-2 hours of waking-up and again every 4-6 hours thereafter, although for some it may be important to eat a meal or snack every 2-4 hours.
3. In order to achieve a balanced diet and support a healthy metabolism, individual meals should consist of some carbohydrate, protein and lots of fibre, including soluble fibre – This can be accomplished using the Healthy Plate Model as seen in Figure 1.

DAILY FLUID INTAKE

Women 19 years and older	2 litres of fluid per day
Breastfeeding women 19 years and older	3 litres of fluid per day
Men 19 years and older	3 litres of fluid per day

DAILY FIBRE INTAKE

Women 19 years and older	At least 20g per day
Pregnant/breastfeeding women 19 years and older	At least 25g per day
Men 19 years and older	At least 30g per day

SOLUBLE VS INSOLUBLE FIBRE

Too much insoluble fibre may lead to bloating and a worsening of symptoms associated with constipation.

Q: What are insoluble fibres?

A: Insoluble fibres do not dissolve in water. We traditionally think of insoluble fibres as ‘roughage’, such as the skins and peels of our fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and legumes.

Q: What are soluble fibres?

A: Soluble fibres dissolve in water, creating a gel or sticky-like texture. Common sources of soluble fibres are the flesh of fruits and vegetables, nuts, seeds and legumes.

“A stool is the result of insoluble fibres being glued together by soluble fibres, and because soluble fibres dissolve in water, adequate fluid is essential to properly lubricate the stool – Otherwise constipation may ensue.” Natalie Wilkinson RD

SOURCES OF SOLUBLE FIBRE

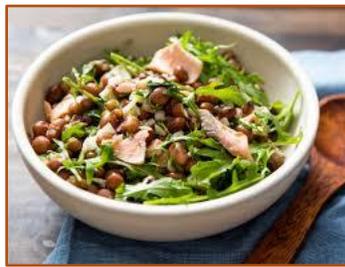
Following a balanced diet, such as Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, ensures a certain amount of fibre from vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. Here is a common list of foods and their soluble fibre content to help guide your choices:

Avocado (1/2):	2.1g	Barley (1/2 cup, cooked)	0.8g
Beans (3/4 cup, cooked)	2.6-5.4g	Brusel Sprouts (1/2 cup)	2.0g
Chia Seeds (1 tbsp, ground)	5.5g	Chickpeas (3/4 cup, cooked)	2.1g
Figs (1/4 cup, dries)	1.9g	Flax (1 tbsp, ground)	0.4-0.9g
Oatmeal (3/4 cup, cooked)	1.4g	Orange (medium)	1.8g
Pear (medium)	1.1-1.5g	Psyllium husks (1 tbsp, ground)	3.5g
Rye Bread (1 slice)	0.6-1.0g	Sweet Potato (1/2 cup)	1.8g
Turnip (1/2 cup, cooked)	1.7g		

HOW TO ADD MORE SOLUBLE FIBRE TO YOUR DIET



Add ground chia/flax and fruit to your yogurt every day.



Add beans, peas, nuts, seeds and fresh or dried fruit to your salads.



Add beans/peas to cooked rice, quinoa, couscous or any other cooked grain.



Many fibre supplements are available on the market - It's best to take these supplements with lots of water and with meals.

DIGESTIVE ENZYMES AND PROBIOTICS

1. Consuming more soluble fibre in the form of complex carbohydrates, such as legumes, can cause bloating and gas for some people. A digestive enzyme, such as Beano, with meals may help alleviate the discomfort.
2. Some people may find a probiotic helpful in treating constipation. The strain *L. reuteri*, available in supplement form (BioGaia) shows the highest level of evidence in helping adults and children with constipation. Functional foods with various bacteria found in yogurts such as Activia, Iogo Probio and Yo optimal, also demonstrate the highest level of evidence.

PROPER ELIMINATION POSTURE

1. Sit on the toilet
2. Elevate your knees so that they are 45 degrees away from your chest
3. Lean forward, relax and breathe into your lower belly to eliminate

