

## **Constipation – An Ayurvedic Perspective**

- 1) Always treat constipation. Never consider it “normal.” Classically it is described as a major cause of ama (impurity) and disease.
- 2) Normal elimination is defined as 1 or 2 easy bowel movements per day, the first being upon arising in the morning; the second (if present) coming in the late afternoon.
- 3) Normal stool is soft, light brown, banana-shaped and floats.
- 4) Main imbalance in constipation is Apana Vata (the downward flow of energy - hips downward).
- 5) Causes:
  - Improper diet
  - Large quantities of meat are constipating, as it is so hard to digest and often takes 36 or more hours to move through the digestive tract (normal vegetarian flow is 24 hours).
  - Excessive salt
  - Hard cheeses
  - Lack of fruits and vegetables
  - Dehydration / Lack of proper fluid intake
  - Lack of exercise
  - Sitting in the same position for a long time
  - Travel
- 6) Can cause unusual symptoms that physicians will not be able to find the cause for example:
  - Nausea
  - Fatigue or weakness in the lower part of the body
  - Cramps in calf muscles
  - Dizziness
  - Back pain
  - Suprapubic pain
  - Facial swelling
- 7) Severe constipation can cause these symptoms:
  - Vomiting
  - Loss of taste
  - Irritable bowel syndrome
  - Inflammatory bowel disease
  - Loss of hearing
  - Dull vision
  - Headache (very common)
  - Depression and / or mental / emotional problems

## Constipation - Treatment

- 1) Treat the root cause
- 2) Supportive measures include:
  - Regular exercise
  - Avoid dehydration / stay hydrated
  - Drink lassi regularly (not mango lassi (see recipes that follow)
  - Eat regular servings of fruits and leafy vegetables
  - Maintain regular routine
- 3) Imbalanced Vata (wind / space) responsible for movement, transportation, communication think the nervous system can cause constipation in at least 3 ways:

\*Dryness creates stool that is too hard and dry to move easily, Vata is responsible for biorhythms and when out of balance the normal contractions of the large intestine can be delayed and not occur in a timely fashion.

\*Vata can be exhausted or depleted so that there is little energy for contraction, this can occur with general Vata depletion and appears as a dull weak Vata pulse.

\*This can also occur with laxative abuse which dulls and weakens the response to the normal nerve impulses being sent to the large intestine.

- 4) Constipation varies in severity:

Mild constipation is when there is a need to strain during bowel movements or occasional days are skipped.

Moderate constipation is when a single day is frequently skipped several times a week.

Severe constipation is when more than one day is skipped without a bowel movement.

- 5) For mild constipation due to dryness:
  - Add 1 tsp of ghee to the first bite of each meal
  - Before bed take 1 cup of whole or 2% milk with two tsp. of ghee and 2 pinches of cardamom; if lactose intolerant take 2 tbsp of soaked raisins before bedtime.
  - Soak 4-5 prunes or figs overnight and take with breakfast.
  - Take at least 1 quart of spice tea during the day (basic recipe: 1 tsp fennel; 1/4 tsp coriander; 1/4 tsp cumin).
- 6) For mild constipation due to other causes:
  - Before bed take 1 cup of whole or 2% milk with two tsp. of ghee and 2 pinches of cardamom; if lactose intolerant take 2 tbsp of soaked raisins before bedtime.
  - Soak 4-5 prunes or figs overnight and take with breakfast.
  - Take 2-3 tablets of Triphala with milk before bedtime.

## 7) For moderate constipation:

Before bed take 1 cup of whole or 2% milk with two tsp. of ghee and 2 pinches of cardamom; if lactose intolerant take 2 tbsp of soaked raisins before bedtime.

Soak 6-8 prunes or figs overnight and take with breakfast.

Take 3-5 tablets of Triphala with milk before bedtime (only if recommended)

For severe – contact Ayurvedic Practitioner Valma Shakti  
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## Lassi

Lassi is a refreshing drink made from yogurt that can be taken with meals to aid in digestion. It is best made from fresh yogurt. This drink is the natural way to get acidophilus in the diet and improve colon health. It is a great source of vitamin B12.

### Plain Lassi:

Put 1 part yogurt into blender with 3,4 or 5 parts water according to preference. (more water makes the lassi lighter and easier to digest.) Blend for 60 seconds. Remove any foam that forms on the top from the blending process.

### Digestive Lassi:

Mix ½ cup yogurt, 2 cups room temperature water, ¼ tsp ground cumin, ¼ tsp salt in blender for 60 seconds. Skim foam off the top. Makes enough for 2 large glasses.

### Sweet Lassi:

Mix ½ cup yogurt, 2 cups room temperature water, ½ tsp turbinado sugar, 4 drops rose water, ¼ tsp cardamom in blender for 60 seconds. Skim foam off the top. Makes enough for 2 large glas