

Constipation

Keeping hydrated and eating more fibre will help your bowels to function regularly. Make simple changes to your diet and lifestyle to improve or avoid constipation. Most cases of constipation resolve quickly. However, if you have persistent constipation you should visit your GP.

- **Consider what may have triggered constipation.** Not enough fibre in your diet, side-effects of medication and dehydration are common causes.
- **Aim to drink at least 1.6-2 litres (6-8 glasses) of fluid** throughout the day to help keep your stools soft and easier to pass.
- **Gradually increase your fibre intake** to avoid stomach cramps, bloating and trapped wind.
- **Choose wholegrain or granary bread, pasta and rice** in place of white options.
- **Opt for high-fibre cereals** such as Weetabix, porridge or bran.
- **Eat fruits and vegetables** to increase your fibre intake. Sweetcorn, beans, lentils, prunes, dates or figs are particularly high in fibre.
- **Choose high-fibre snacks** such as dried fruit, nuts, seeds or oatcakes.
- **See the 'Making every mouthful count' resource** for more information if you have lost weight or have a small appetite.
- **Keep as mobile as possible** because physical activity can help ease constipation.
- **Never ignore the urge to go!** Ensure you have enough time and privacy to pass stools comfortably.
- **Laxatives** may be advised by your pharmacist or GP.
- **Dietary and lifestyle changes may take up to four weeks to take effect.** Visit your GP for more support.



Tip: See 'Keeping hydrated' and 'Hydration boosters' resources for more advice on how to improve your hydration status.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about these information sheets, please contact the Lambeth and Southwark Action on Malnutrition Project on 020 30495422 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch using the following contact details.

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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