



# International Journal of Ayurveda and Pharma Research

## Review Article

### CONSTIPATION CURE AND TREATMENT THROUGH DIET, YOGA, HOME REMEDIES

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Received on: 26/08/2014

Revised on: 15/09/2014

Accepted on: 23/09/2014

#### ABSTRACT

Constipation is a common disturbance of the digestive system where the difficulty during defecation or the sensation of incomplete bowel evacuation. Bowel frequency is influenced by several factors including intake of dietary fiber, emotional make up, and psychological morbidity. Introspective individuals have a lower bowel frequency and produce less stool than extroverts. Infrequent bowel actions in the absence of symptoms can be regarded as part of the normal spectrum of bowel frequency. Low bowel frequency is more common in women. Constipation is a common problem of elderly people of age 60 plus where use of laxative is frequent. Constipation is supposed to be the main cause of all diseases. Therefore, it should be treated thoroughly. Several other diseases and disorders also crop up if the bowel is constipated. Constipation can cure easy by practicing some *Yogasana* (postures) *Bhujanghasana*, *Trikonasana* (triangular stretch pose), *Ardha Matsyendrasana* (Half spinal twist), *Supta Vajrasana* (the sleeping pelvic pose), *Dhanurasana* (Bow pose), *Sarvangasana* (Shoulder stand) and *Kapalabhati* (frontal brain bellowing), *Pranayama*. The most important cause of constipation is diet with low dietary fiber and heavy fat. Diet which contains high fiber leads to overcome constipation more powerfully.

**Key words:** Balanced diet, Natural Cure, *Shatkarma*, Constipation, *Yogasana*.

#### INTRODUCTION

Constipation or irregularity is a condition of the digestive system where a person (or animal) experiences hard feces that are difficult to eliminate; it may be extremely painful, and in severe cases (fecal impaction) lead to symptoms of bowel obstruction. Constipation is defined as having a bowel movement fewer than three times per week. With constipation stools are usually hard, dry, small in size, and difficult to eliminate. Some people who are constipated find it painful to have a bowel movement and often experience straining, bloating, and the sensation of a full bowel<sup>1</sup>. Constipation occurs when the colon absorbs

too much water or if the colon's muscle contractions are slow or sluggish, causing the stool to move through the colon too slowly. As a result, stools can become hard and dry<sup>2,3</sup>.

The number of bowel movements generally decreases with age. Ninety-five percent of adults have bowel movements between three and 21 times per week, and this would be considered normal. The most common pattern is one bowel movement a day, but this pattern is seen in less than 50% of people. Moreover, most people are irregular and do not have bowel movements

every day or the same number of bowel movements each day. Medically speaking, constipation usually is defined as fewer than three bowel movements per week<sup>4</sup>.

### **COMMON CAUSES OF CONSTIPATION<sup>5,6</sup>**

Insufficient fluids/Dehydration, too little fiber and high sugar diet (three of the most common causes). Without enough fluids and bulk, and a high sugar diet, the peristaltic muscles become sluggish, and stool becomes hard and develops rough edges. These rough edges can cause a rectal fissure, a painful microscopic tear in the rectum.

1. Too much fat in the diet & laxative abuse.
2. Lack of physical exercise.
3. Holding back the urge to defecate.
4. High stress levels and anxiety.
5. Food sensitivities and intolerances. Cow's milk can cause hard, dry stools in children.
6. Medications such as iron pills, antacids, diuretics, pain killers and anti depressants.
7. Thyroid inactivity, IBS, Stroke, Liver problems, stroke leading to nerve damage.
8. Imbalance in intestinal flora.
9. Magnesium deficiency and folic acid deficiency.
10. Parasites (one of the most common causes for chronic constipation. Giardia lamblia - in the U.S. it is estimated that about 50% of the water supplied to the communities is contaminated with this parasite)
11. Changes in life or routine such as pregnancy, aging, and travel.
12. Problems with the colon and rectum and intestinal function (chronic idiopathic constipation) are defined as less than one bowel movement per week.

### **How is constipation evaluated (diagnosed)**

A careful history and physical examination is important in all patients with constipation. There are many tests that can be used to evaluate constipation. Most patients need only a few basic tests. The

other tests are reserved for individuals who have severe constipation or whose constipation does not respond easily to treatment.

### **Diagnosis and Tests for Constipation<sup>7</sup>**

1. General medical enquiry including symptoms and causes.
2. Tests-Blood, urine and stool.
3. Test for pelvic floor dysfunction and Irritable bowel syndrome
4. Sigmoidoscopy, Rigid proctoscopy and Colonoscopy to know about colon and rectum bleeding.
5. X-ray to know about rectum empty stool.
6. Abdominal and anal ultrasound.
7. GI transit test-radioactive markers traverse the digestive system.
8. Thyroid Test
9. Anorectal Testing-to know the well functionality of rectum and pelvic.
10. Colonic Motility Test
11. Hydrogen Breath Test- to be acquainted with fructose intolerance.

### **Constipation signs and Symptoms<sup>8</sup>**

1. Tongue colour gets darken.
2. Digestion of foods takes long time.
3. Yellowish coloured stools.
4. Difficult passage of stool.
5. Bad breath
6. Bowel movement problem
7. Abdominal bloating, cramps and uneasiness.
8. Excessive gas
9. Loss of appetite
10. Feeling of inactiveness
11. Rectal bleeding in case of acute constipation.
12. Nausea
13. Vomiting

14. Weight loss
15. Headache and dizziness
16. Dry, small and hard fecal formation
17. Diarrhea

### Complications of constipation<sup>9</sup>

1. Hemorrhoids (piles)
2. Faecal impaction-stool harden in large intestine and rectum
3. Fecal incontinence
4. Rectal prolapsed means coming out of rectal tissue from anus.
5. Anal fissure
6. Rectal bleeding
7. Hernia

### Yoga Treatment Cures Constipation

The research work was carried out as "The Effect of Specific Yogic Exercises and Combination of Specific Yogic Exercises with Autogenic Training on Selected Physiological, Psychological and Biochemical Variables of College Men Students". Dept. of Physical Education, Alagappa University Karaikudi. Tamil Nadu

Constipation is one of the major causes of many of the other diseases. Hence, it is important to work on this in order to prevent many other problems associated with it. Therefore, it should be treated thoroughly. Several other diseases and disorders also crop up if the bowel is constipated<sup>10</sup>.

1. *Bhujanghasana* (Cobra pose): Is extremely beneficial in dealing with constipation, gas and flatulence problem.
2. *Trikonasana* (triangular stretch pose) Helps in the process of easy defecation and therefore is recommended for constipation.
3. *Ardha Matsyendrasana* (Half spinal twist): Postures like *Ardha Matsyendrasana* helps in case of chronic constipation.
4. *Supta Vajrasana* (the sleeping pelvic pose): Aids in digestion and constipation relief.

5. *Vajrasana* (Diamond pose): Improves the functioning of whole digestive system.
6. *Dhanurasana* (Bow pose): Is helpful in case of constipation and easy defecation.
7. *Sarvangasana* (Shoulder stand): Improve digestion and relieves from the problem of constipation.
8. *Mayurasana* (Peacock pose): This asana gives a very good massage to digestive system and helps relieve indigestion.
9. *Pavanuktasana*: Thereby corrects flatulence and constipation. It also helps reduce abdominal fat.
10. *Naukasana* (the boat poses): Improves and activates the digestive system and intestine.
11. *Halasana* (Plough pose): *Halasana* also maintains the health of thyroid and parathyroid glands and is highly recommended for people suffering from diabetes mellitus.
12. *Shalabhasana* (Locust pose): Removes sluggishness in the abdominal region, strengthens abdominal muscles, helps in digestion and brings relief from constipation.
13. *Mandukasana*: Beneficial for constipation as well as other digestive disorders.
14. *Paschimottanasana* (Head to knee pose): Practicing *Paschimottanasana* on a regular basis helps deal with even severe and chronic constipation.
15. *Yogamudra*: Improves metabolism and removes constipation.
16. *Katichakrasana* (waist rotating pose): remove constipation.
17. *Kriya*: This yoga practice is excellent to ease from all forms of constipation. *Kapalbhati* (frontal brain bellowing): Helps in abdominal movement and quite effective for constipation<sup>11</sup>.

### Naturopathy for Constipation

The study was done to compare the effects of abdominal aroma massage and meridian massage on constipation and stress in college women with functional

constipation. While there was no significant difference between two groups, there was a significant difference within the groups in the constipation severity (aroma group: 1st week, meridian group: except 4th week), defecation frequency (aroma group: 3rd week, meridian group: 2nd and 3rd week), and stress (aroma group: all weeks, meridian group: except 4th week) after different duration of experiment.

Based on these results, both abdominal massages relieved constipation and stress. Resorting to either types of massage will contribute to the reduction of use of stool softeners, suppositories, or enemas.

Role of *Ushnadakapana* in *Vibandha* Department of *Swasthavritta* S.D.M. college of *Ayurveda* and hospital Hassan in 2009. The symptoms were decreased in both groups, suggesting that efficacy of *Ushnadaka* in getting relief from *Vibandha*.

Constipation is a common disturbance of the digestive system where the bowel didn't move properly. Constipation is a common problem of elderly people of age 60 plus where use of laxative is frequent. Appendicitis, rheumatism, arthritis, high blood pressure, cataract and cancer are the diseases where chronic constipation is a predisposing factor. In Constipation, fruits diet for a week is preferable<sup>12</sup>.

#### **Nature Cure Treatment for Constipation**

1. The most important factor in curing constipation is natural and simple diet.
2. Regular drinking of water is essential as it clean the system.
3. Drinking lukewarm water with lime juice is a highly effective remedy for constipation.
4. The observance of regular hours for meal, elimination and sleep, balanced diet, and sufficient exercise are essential in the treatment of constipation.

5. Copper vessel water is too beneficial for constipation.
6. All fruits except banana and jack fruits are beneficial in the treatment of constipation.
7. Pear is regarded as one of the best laxative fruits.
8. Guava due to roughage helps in the normal evacuation of the bowel.
9. Grapes contain cellulose, sugar and organic acid that make them a laxative food.
10. Linseed is extremely useful in difficult cases of constipation.
11. The bowel may be cleansed daily through enema.
12. A cold friction bath is also useful in curing constipation.
13. Exercise is beneficial to ease the constipation<sup>13</sup>.

#### **Home Remedy for Constipation Cure and Treatment**

Home Remedy can cure constipation naturally. It means one can find natural constipation relief through the items that is present in kitchen or at home. Here few constipation home remedies are mentioned to tackle constipation naturally and herbally.

#### **Home remedies for constipation**

1. Take warm milk before going to bed.
2. Bale fruit is excellent for constipation.
3. Guava provides roughage and gives relief from constipation.
4. 3 tsp. of castor oil in milk may help in chronic constipation.
5. Drinking 3-4 glasses of water early morning helps in bowel movement and normal stool.
6. Add more fibrous fruits and leafy green vegetables in your diet.
7. Taking 2tsp of molasses is good to treat constipation.
8. Sleep at least 6-8 hours.
9. Proper cooked vegetables should consume.
10. Eat only whenever you are feeling hungry.

11. Use spices like cumin, turmeric and coriander, all helps to digest your food.
  12. Avoid non-veg, deep fried, junk food etc.
  13. Cabbage juice is beneficial in treating constipation.
  14. Heat some dry grapes in milk, drink it after straining, a natural remedy for constipation.
  15. Spiegel seeds + warm milk + sugar good for constipation.
  16. Water + Epsom salt in the ratio of 2: 1 helps to ease constipation.
  17. Pear is helpful in chronic constipation.
  18. More fibrous nature of orange easily digests the food and helps in bowel movement.
  19. Fruits like papaya and figs act like as cleanser for the bowel.
  20. Fennel seeds are beneficial in the treatment of constipation<sup>14</sup>
2. Wholesome diet, fruits, boiled vegetables and soup is a good remedy for constipation as well as for good health because of enriched nutrition.
  3. Vegetables like radish, turnip, peas, carrot, tomato, bitter gourd, beetroot, sprouts, coriander, cabbage, mints are useful to relieve from constipation.
  4. Eat fresh fruits like avocado, guava, mango, orange, jamun, papaya, grapes, etc.
  5. Increases the quantity of salads in your diet.
  6. Increase the intake of watermelon, mangoes, cucumber.
  7. Drink more quantity of water.
  8. Eat whole grain cereals, bran, honey and lentils.
  9. Milk products like butter, ghee and cream.
  10. Dry fruits like fig, apricot and dates.

### Diet rules for Constipation

A research work carried out as "An evidence-based dietary fiber enrichment programme for relieving constipation in elderly orthopedic patients". Constipation is a multifactorial digestive disorder highly prevailing among the hospitalized elderly orthopedic patients. Unlike Western countries, laxative therapy is used to be the first line remedy for constipation in many hospitals of Hong Kong although fiber-rich diet has been proven by numerous studies as the best alternative with low cost and less complications.

The most important cause of constipation is diet with low dietary fiber and heavy fat. Diet which contains high fiber leads to overcome constipation more powerfully. Constipation or chronic constipation can prevent in adult or children by following simple rules of diet habits and proper diet information. Food chart and food pyramid is too recommended for constipated people<sup>15</sup>.

1. Food should be properly chewed and each morsel for at least 15 times.

### CONCLUSION

Constipation is a condition in which there is difficulty in emptying the bowels, usually associated with hardened faeces. The main treatment of constipation involves the increased intake of water and fiber (either dietary or as supplements). This condition can be prevented and also cure by adopting simple procedures, diet rules in day today life. Minimal alteration in the life style may give complete relief from the constipation.

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**Cite this article as:**

Bargale Sushant Sukumar, Shashirekha H K. Constipation Cure and Treatment through Diet, Yoga, Home Remedies. Int. J. Ayur. Pharma Research. 2014;2(5):6-11.

**Source of support: Nil, Conflict of interest: None Declared**

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