

## WHAT IS CONSTIPATION?

Constipation is the passage of too few bowel movements per week. People have very individual ideas about what constipation is and what constitutes “normal” bowel function. While it may be normal for one person to have a bowel movement three times a day, the next person may have one three times a week. Constipation may mean hard, dry stools that are difficult to pass, even if you go every day. Chances are you know what is regular for you, and therefore what is irregular for you.

## WHAT CAUSES CONSTIPATION?

In trying to understand why you sometimes experience constipation, remember that your body’s needs are unique. From time to time these needs change, sometimes as a result of diet and exercise. In turn, your body responds with certain symptoms, including constipation.

Common causes of occasional constipation include:

- Poor eating habits (for example, too much junk food, too much caffeine, irregular eating times)
- Diet lacking in fiber and/or liquids
- Lack of exercise
- Some medications
- Stress
- Pregnancy
- Travel

More serious causes, such as surgery or disease, are rarely responsible for the mild constipation most people occasionally experience. However, if you are constipated frequently and non-prescription medications do not improve your condition, be sure to tell your doctor.

## WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT CONSTIPATION?

Help yourself maintain regularity by adding some of these simple steps to your daily routine:

- Gradually add high-fiber foods to your diet including: fruit, dried fruits, unpeeled raw vegetables, bran cereals and whole-grain breads.
- Drink 8 to 10 glasses of juice or water each day
- Follow a regular exercise program. Walking is good for the heart and body, and abdominal exercises help improve intestinal muscle tone. Ask your doctor about a program that would be right for you.
- Respond to the urge to have a bowel movement. When you feel the urge, relax and let your body take the time it needs. If you ignore the urge, you could prolong the problem.
- If one is recommended by your doctor, take a high-fiber supplement to help you stay regular.
- Use laxatives only as your doctor recommends.

## HOW CAN ANORECTAL MANOMETRY WITH THE MCOMPASS HELP?

Anorectal Manometry is a test performed to evaluate patients with chronic constipation. A catheter is placed into the anus to record pressures as patients tighten and relax the sphincter muscle. Anorectal manometry measures the pressures of the anal sphincter muscles, the sensation the rectum and the neural reflexes that are needed for normal bowel movements.

## HOW IS THE TEST PERFORMED?

You will be asked to undress from the waist down and to put on a gown with the opening in the back. A trained specialist will explain everything that will happen. The specialist will ask you to lie on an examination table, turn onto your left side, and bend your knees. A small catheter with a small balloon at the end will be inserted into your rectum. The balloon will be inflated and measurements will be taken while you squeeze and relax your muscles.



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For more information on the mcompass visit:  
[www.medspira.com/mcompass](http://www.medspira.com/mcompass)

