

Baritz Wellness Center, P.C.

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Constipation

04/13/11, 05/02/11

Constipation is difficult, incomplete or infrequent bowel movements. Stools are often dry, hard and small. 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. Other symptoms of constipation include: regular use of laxatives, nausea, bad breath, excessive gas and abdominal bloating after eating. Constipation is medically defined as fewer than three bowel movements per week; however it is probably less than optimum to defecate less than once a day.

Digestion is a north to south process that begins in the mouth and ends in the toilet. Peristalsis is a series of wave-like muscle contractions that moves food to different processing stations in the digestive tract. The process of peristalsis begins in the esophagus when food is swallowed. The strong wave-like motions of the smooth muscle in the esophagus carry the food to the stomach, where it is churned into a liquid mixture called chyme. Peristalsis continues in the small intestine where it mixes and shifts the chyme back and forth, allowing nutrients to be absorbed into the bloodstream through the intestinal walls. Peristalsis then moves the chyme to the large intestine where water from the undigested food material is absorbed into the bloodstream. Finally, the remaining waste products are excreted through the rectum.

Any interruption of the digestive process can result in constipation. Constipation is most often associated with one or more underlying factors such as:

Low fluid intake	Low digestive enzymes
Low fiber diet	Intestinal fungal overgrowth
Lack of exercise	Parasite infestation
Poor liver function	Bowel flora imbalance
Poor gall bladder function	Low pituitary function
Certain medications	Anxiety, stress, depression
Irritable Bowel Syndrome	Chronic laxative use
	Pregnancy

Treatment Considerations

1. Assist with bowel movements
2. Improve stool bulk
3. Improve gastrointestinal motility (peristalsis)
4. Improve liver and gall bladder function

To have a custom program created for you or for a free consult call 508 583-2565

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