



Constipation (in Adults)



Overview

This condition is a problem with the function of your bowels. It can be an issue for you as you age. Constipation can be related to your diet or your daily routine. But for some people, it can be a sign of a more serious disorder.

Causes

Your diet can cause constipation. Not enough fiber or fluids can trigger it. It can be caused by a diet high in fat, sugar or alcohol, or a diet low in calories. It's often a problem for travelers. Your daily habits can also cause constipation. Lack of exercise, and repeatedly ignoring the desire to move your bowels can cause this problem. It can be caused by medications, especially pain medications that contain opioids, such as morphine or codeine. And, constipation can be caused by a wide range of medical conditions.

Symptoms

Symptoms of constipation may include cramping and bloating. Your stools may be hard and dry. You may strain when you use the toilet, and you may not be able to empty your bowels completely.

Prevention and Treatment

You can help avoid constipation by drinking plenty of fluids and by increasing the amount of fiber you eat. It's important to stay active. Daily exercise will help keep your bowels regular. Attempt a bowel movement daily. Try to do it at the same time every day. If these methods don't help, your healthcare provider may recommend laxatives or adjust any medications you are currently taking.

