



TOP 7 STEPS FOR TREATING CONSTIPATION, NATURALLY

Below is a step-wise approach to safely and naturally treat constipation. You can try each step for a few days, then add in the next, or you can tackle all the steps from the outset.

Step #1 : Go Gluten and Dairy Free

Gluten-containing foods and dairy products can both cause constipation, and this may be the only sign of a food sensitivity. Gas and bloating or belly aches after these foods increase the likelihood that they are a trigger. I always recommend starting any treatment plan for chronic constipation out with a basic elimination diet for 3 weeks to see if there are dietary triggers contributing to your constipation.

Step #2 : Drink Enough Water

Aim to drink half your body weight in ounces of clean, filtered water every single day.

Step #3 : Add the Right Foods and Fiber

In addition to taking out the triggers, it's important to add in good quality fiber in the form of plenty of fresh vegetables. This includes non-starchy veggies + starchy vegetables (like winter squash, sweet potatoes, plantains, yucca, and taro).

In addition to fiber from whole food sources, fiber supplements have been shown to be safe and effective. Pick just one or two of the options below to use at the same time. Too much fiber can be irritating to the gut, and bulk fiber like flax and chia seeds can gum up in the gut and cause constipation if you're not drinking enough water. Each fiber "dose" should be accompanied by about 4-8 oz of fluid.

Glucomannan from the Japanese konjac root, which is available in natural food stores (the dose is 100 mg/kg of your body weight, to a max of 5 gm per day, with 50 mL of water).

Flax seeds, up to 2 TBS ground twice daily, is an effective bulk laxative that can be mixed into a smoothie, mixed into nut butter and spread on an apple or tossed in a salad, or mixed into 4 oz. of water.

Here's a great recipe for incorporating flax seeds and fiber-rich dried fruit into your daily diet. The dried fruit is also rich in iron and calcium.

RECIPE: Fruit Balls

Rich in nutrients, fruit balls are a great laxative. I don't recommend these as an everyday treat when you're not suffering from constipation. These should be used more acutely to get things moving, and considered a "treat".

- ½ cup organic raisins
- ½ cup organic, unsweetened prunes
- ½ cup almonds

- ½ cup shredded coconut
- ¼ cup flaxseed

To prepare: Slowly grind all ingredients except the coconut or almond meal in a blender or food processor. Add a little water as needed to form a slightly sticky dough. Form into 2-inch balls and roll in the coconut. Have fun creating your own variations.

Serving size 1-2 fruit balls, depending on your child's age. These are sweet so consider them a "treat" or dessert.

Chia seeds are also mildly laxative. There are some wonderful chia seed puddings online. Chia seed should be used in a ratio of 8 parts liquid to 1 part chia seeds, otherwise it can absorb water from the intestines and add to, not fix, the problem!

Psyllium or plantain seeds can be mixed into smoothies, similarly to ground flax seeds.

Step #4 : Add in Beneficial Nutrients

A daily probiotic is a must, and can make an enormous difference. Prebiotics, in the form of fructose oligosaccharide, may be just as important as the probiotic, as they provide the food that the probiotic needs to thrive, and have been shown to lead to healthier, softer stools.

This is the probiotic I recommend : [Prescript Assist](#) – take 1 capsule, twice daily

[Designs For Health MagCitrato powder](#) : start with 1 teaspoon at bedtime and slowly increase as needed. Reduce the dose or stop completely if your bowels become too loose. Magnesium is great for alleviating constipation. It helps to promote bowel relaxation and helps ease constipation by increasing fluid in the small intestine (makes stools softer). I don't recommend using MagCitrato all the time, only for acute situations but I do recommend taking 3 capsules of [Magnesium Glycinate Chelate](#) every night at bedtime to keep your bowels moving and to help with sleep and stress.

[Buffered Vitamin C powder](#) : 1/2 tsp, 1-3 times per day. This also helps with detoxification and inflammation, and supports the adrenals glands and stress management.

Senna: a strong stimulating laxative so I don't recommend it for daily use, but it does come in handy in a pinch. To cut down on the belly cramping that sometimes comes along with using senna, use a tea bag combination that contains ginger and fennel seeds, or peppermint leaf. [Smooth Move](#) by Traditional Medicinals is a good example of a tea blend you can use. [Gaia Herbs Natural Laxative Tea](#) is another.

To prepare: Steep the senna blend tea bag in 1 cup of boiling water as usual, and give 1/8-1/2 cup 1-2 times daily, depending on your child's age and the extent of the constipation. Expect to see results 5-7 hours after taking the tea.

Step #5 : Take an Herbal Laxative

If nothing in step 1 seems to work, take an herbal laxative once a day for seven days. Common herbal laxative preparations include cascara, senna, and rhubarb. Take 2–3 capsules before bed. I recommend [Designs For Health Colon Rx](#). ColonRx™ can be used as a fast-acting, mild laxative for short periods of time, or as a daily bowel detoxifier for anyone in need of a long term tonic to help strengthen and tonify the bowels. Take 2 capsules at bedtime.

These should NOT be used regularly as they are habit forming and may make your colon lazy. However, using them for the 7 days are on the program is perfectly safe and can resolve constipation for some. Although if Step 1 is followed, these likely will not be needed. By the end of the week your bowel should be functioning

properly so going off the laxatives should not be an issue. Proper bowel function is 1-2 bowel movements a day—the first before 10 am.

Step #6 : Reduce Stress

There's a strong connection between stress and our gut health. In some people stress causes constipation. Do your best to identify stressors and begin to incorporate self care activities to counterbalance the negative effects of stress. A variety of mind-body techniques, including biofeedback, have been found to be helpful when experiencing stress-related constipation.

Abdominal massage can be very relaxing as well, and according to medical literature review, may be helpful in the treatment of constipation. The technique is simply to massage the abdomen in a circular clockwise direction, firmly but comfortably, in a diameter a few inches from the navel, using the palm of the hand, for about 5 minutes. A small amount of massage oil can make the massage strokes easier to perform.

Sometimes the constipation itself leads to a vicious cycle of stress because it hurts to have a bowel movement, so using prebiotics and probiotics as discussed below, and the herbs, is important to also include in your plan.

Step #7 : Fix Pooping Posture

Squatting is the most natural position for having a BM; sitting upright, as we do on the toilet, is one of the least natural positions! Purchase a [squatty potty type of toilet stool](#) if you don't already use one. It allows you to sit on the toilet but have your legs elevated to more of a squatting position. This is great for pregnant moms too!

In Summary

There are many natural approaches to treating constipation, from simple steps like changing the diet and adding in a pre- and probiotics, to massage, biofeedback, and herbal medicines. All have a track record of safety and effectiveness.

In a world already rife with toxic environmental exposures, I'd start there and save Miralax for urgent use only.