WHAT IS CONSTIPATION?

Constipation is defined as passage of less than 2 bowel motions per week, with difficulty straining or pain and a sense of incomplete evacuation.

Constipation is very common, and for some people, especially older adults, it can be an ongoing concern. People often think that constipation means not having a bowel movement every day. But it is normal to have bowel movements at intervals ranging from 3 times a day to once every 3 days.

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WHAT CAUSES CONSTIPATION?

- Poor diet and lack of exercise
- Poor fluid intake
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- If constipation with painful defecation: Anorectal fissure, Rectal prolapse
- Completely absent product of bowel output can be an alarming symptoms of Colorectal Cancer
- Constipation with blood: Diverticulosis, hemorrhoids.
- Endocrine problems: Hypothyroidism
- Drugs: Opiates, Furosemide and calcium channel blockers

WHEN TO SEEK TREATMENT?

- Change in bowel habits see your doctor to determine the cause and whether you need a test such as a colonoscopy.
- Also contact your doctor if you have constipation along with stomach pain when having a bowel movement, vomiting, blood mix in your stool, rectal bleeding or weight loss that is not intentional.

SYMPTOMS OF CONSTIPATION

- Infrequent bowel movements
- Straining when going to the bathroom
- Hard and/or small faeces
- Sense of incomplete evacuation after going to the bathroom
- Lower abdominal discomfort
- Abdominal bloating, occasionally with distension
- Anal bleeding or fissures from the trauma caused by hard faeces
- Occasionally overflow diarrhoea due to obstruction of the colon by hard stool
- Rarely, colonic perforation
- Psychological distress and/or obsession with having to go to the bathroom

HOW TO DEAL WITH IT?

- Drinking more water
- Change to healthy lifestyle (Healthy diet and exercise regularly)
- Treat causes constipation if the causes of the constipation is due to underlying disease