

Regulating Bowel Motions (Constipation)

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This handout is intended for educational purposes only and does not replace or substitute medical advice. Speak with your healthcare practitioner for personalised nutrition and advice.

Fiber Intake:

Fibre is crucial for bowel health as it adds bulk to the stool, helping it move through the intestines more easily, preventing constipation.

Include the following foods daily when possible:

Soluble Fiber	Absorbs water, forming a gel-like substance that softens the stool.	Oats, chia seeds, flaxseeds, psyllium husks, lentils, chickpeas, black beans, kidney beans, white beans, sweet potatoes, carrots, pears, oranges (& other citrus fruits), plums, banana’s (not too ripe), cucumbers, zucchini.
Insoluble Fiber	Adds bulk to stools and helps food pass more quickly through the stomach and intestines. It’s excellent for preventing constipation.	Brown rice, quinoa, millet, buckwheat, bran (if wheat is not an issue), rice bran, nuts & seeds, green beans, cauliflower, potatoes (skin on), broccoli, cabbage, kale, capsicum, tomatoes (skin on), celery, cucumbers, berries
Prebiotic Foods	Feed beneficial gut bacteria, promoting a healthy gut environment which helps reduce bloating and gas.	Garlic & onions (if tolerated, cooked well), leeks, asparagus, jerusalem artichokes, dandelion greens, bananas (slightly green), apples, oats, lentils, chickpeas, black beans, ground flaxseeds

Combining These Foods:

To maximise digestive health, it's helpful to combine both soluble and insoluble fibre along with prebiotic foods in daily meals. For example:

- A chia pudding with almond milk (soluble) topped with berries (insoluble), and a side of garlic-sautéed spinach (prebiotic) is a great breakfast.
- A lunch of quinoa (insoluble) with broccoli (insoluble), sweet potato (soluble), and a salad featuring asparagus (prebiotic) can support digestive regularity.

Increasing these foods gradually, along with plenty of water, can help balance bowel motions, reduce constipation, and alleviate bloating and flatulence.

Water Intake:

Water helps fibre do its job. Without sufficient hydration, fibre can actually make constipation worse. Water softens the stool and helps move it through the digestive tract, preventing hard stools that are difficult to pass.

Aim for 2 - 3 liters of water per day.

Remove Common Triggers:

Processed foods, sugars, artificial sweeteners, and alcohol can disrupt the gut microbiome, lead to poor digestion, and cause inflammation. Reducing these foods can alleviate symptoms of bloating and flatulence.

FODMAPs are specific carbohydrates that ferment quickly in the gut, causing gas and bloating. Limiting high-FODMAP foods (like wheat, onions, and dairy) can reduce these symptoms significantly. ***I will send you a separate handout for low FODMAP foods.***

Gluten & Dairy Free Approach:

Many people with digestive issues like IBS, bloating, and constipation are sensitive to gluten and dairy. Removing these foods can ease inflammation and irritation in the gut, helping to restore normal bowel function and reduce bloating and cramps.

Regular Meal Timing:

Eating smaller, frequent meals every 3 - 4 hours helps regulate digestion and prevent overwhelming the digestive system, which can lead to bloating and cramping. Regular intervals between meals can also promote more consistent bowel movements, preventing constipation.

Physical Activity:

Physical activity, particularly exercises like walking or yoga, stimulates bowel motility by increasing the activity of intestinal muscles, helping to move stool through the digestive system more efficiently. This can relieve constipation and reduce bloating.

Manage Stress

Stress affects digestion by altering gut motility (either speeding it up or slowing it down), which can lead to symptoms like bloating, constipation, or diarrhoea. Managing stress through relaxation techniques helps balance the gut-brain connection, reducing digestive discomfort.

Mindful Eating

Proper digestion begins in the mouth. Thoroughly chewing food allows enzymes in saliva to start breaking down food particles, which reduces the burden on the stomach and intestines. This leads to less bloating and more efficient digestion.

Breakfast Recipes

(These recipes can also be used for as snacks)

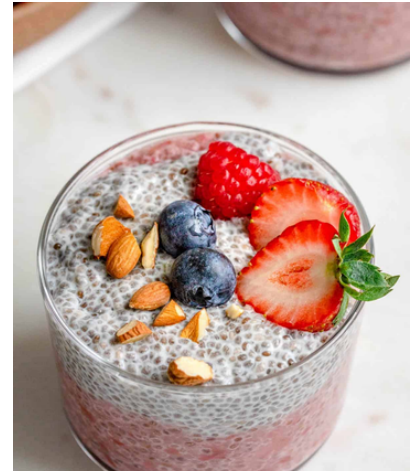
Chia Pudding with Berries

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp chia seeds (soluble fibre)
- 1 cup almond milk (or another dairy-free milk)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp ground flaxseeds (prebiotic and soluble fibre)
- 1/4 cup mixed berries (insoluble fibre)

Method:

- Mix chia seeds, almond milk, and vanilla extract in a jar or bowl.
- Refrigerate overnight or for at least 4 hours until it thickens.
- Top with berries and flaxseeds before serving.



Oatmeal with Ground Flaxseeds and Pear

- Ingredients:
 - 1/2 cup rolled oats (soluble fibre)
 - 1 tbsp ground flaxseeds (soluble fibre and prebiotic)
 - 1/2 pear, sliced (soluble fibre and prebiotic)
 - 1 tsp cinnamon
 - 1 cup water or almond milk
- Method:
 - a. Cook oats with water or almond milk over medium heat.
 - b. Once thickened, stir in flaxseeds and cinnamon.
 - c. Top with sliced pear before serving.



Green Smoothie

- Ingredients:
 - 1/2 cup spinach (insoluble fibre)
 - 1/4 cucumber (soluble fibre)
 - 1/2 banana (soluble fibre and prebiotic)
 - 1/4 cup frozen berries (insoluble fibre)
 - 1 tbsp chia seeds (soluble fibre)
 - 1 cup almond milk or water
- Method:
 - a. Blend all ingredients until smooth.
 - b. Serve immediately for a fibre-packed start to the day.



Snack Recipes

Apple with Almond Butter

Ingredients:

- 1 apple (insoluble fibre and prebiotic)
- 1 tbsp almond butter (if no nut allergy)
- 1 tbsp flaxseeds sprinkled on top (if nut allergy).



Carrot and Cucumber Sticks with Hummus

- 1 carrot, cut into sticks (insoluble fibre)
- 1/2 cucumber, cut into sticks (soluble fibre)
- 2 tbsp hummus (prebiotic and soluble fibre from chickpeas)



Banana and Peppermint Tea

- 1 small banana (soluble and prebiotic)
- 1 cup peppermint tea (soothes digestive system)

Cucumber & Tomato Salad with Hummus

- 1/2 a large cucumber, chopped (soluble)
- 4 cherry tomatoes, chopped (insoluble)
- 1 handful of chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup hummus (prebiotic and soluble fibre from chickpeas).

Veggie Rice Paper Rolls with Avocado and Carrot

Ingredients:

- 4 rice paper sheets
- 1/4 avocado, sliced (soluble fibre)
- 1 medium carrot, julienned (insoluble fibre)
- 1/4 cucumber, julienned (soluble fibre)
- 1/4 cup spinach leaves (insoluble fibre)
- 1 tbsp hummus (optional for extra prebiotics)

Method:

1. Soak rice paper sheets in warm water for 10-15 seconds until soft.
2. Lay each sheet flat on a clean surface.
3. Place a small amount of avocado, carrot, cucumber, and spinach in the centre of each sheet.
4. Roll up like a burrito, folding in the sides and rolling tightly.
5. Serve immediately, with or without a dip like hummus or a light tahini sauce.



Lunch & Dinner Recipes

Quinoa-Stuffed Bell Peppers

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup cooked quinoa (insoluble fibre)
- 1/2 cup chopped spinach (insoluble fibre)
- 1/4 cup red onion (prebiotic)
- 1 garlic clove, minced (prebiotic)
- 2 large bell peppers, tops removed and seeded (insoluble fibre)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt, pepper, and herbs to taste

Method:

- Sauté onions, garlic, and spinach in olive oil.
- Mix with cooked quinoa and season with salt and pepper.
- Stuff the bell peppers with the mixture and bake at 180°C for 20-25 minutes until the peppers are tender.



Quinoa and Lentil Soup

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup cooked quinoa (soluble fibre and prebiotic)
- 1/4 cup lentils (soluble fibre and prebiotic)
- 1/4 cup chopped carrots (insoluble fibre)
- 1/4 cup chopped celery (insoluble fibre)
- 1/4 cup onion (prebiotic)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced (prebiotic)
- 3 cups vegetable broth

Method:

1. Sauté garlic and onion until soft.
2. Add carrots, celery, lentils, quinoa, and broth.
3. Simmer until all ingredients are tender.



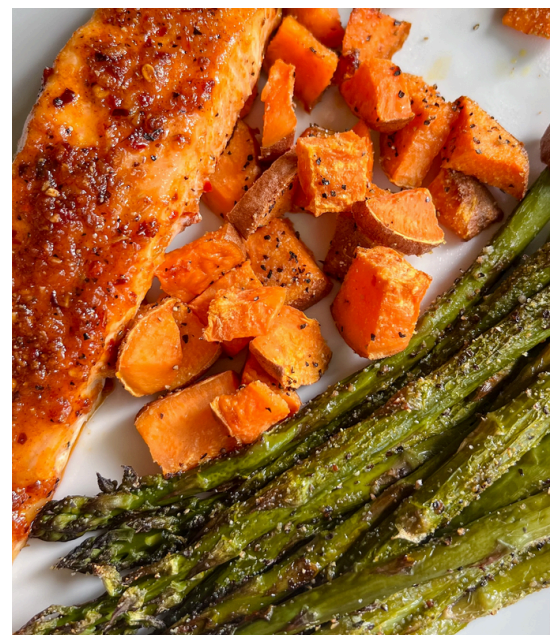
Baked Salmon with Asparagus and Sweet Potato

Ingredients:

- 1 salmon fillet (rich in omega-3s)
- 1/2 bunch asparagus, roasted (prebiotic)
- 1/2 cup roasted sweet potato (soluble fibre)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt, pepper, and herbs to taste (e.g., thyme)

Method:

1. Season the salmon fillet and bake at 180°C for 15-20 minutes.
2. Roast asparagus and sweet potatoes in olive oil until tender.
3. Serve together with herbs for added flavour.



Lunch & Dinner Recipes

Sweet Potato and Lentil Curry

Ingredients:

- 1 medium sweet potato, cubed (soluble fibre)
- 1/2 cup dried lentils (soluble fibre and prebiotic)
- 1 small onion, diced (prebiotic)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced (prebiotic)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp curry powder
- 1 can coconut milk (optional for creaminess)
- 1 cup spinach (insoluble fibre)
- 1/2 cup diced tomatoes (insoluble fibre)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh coriander (optional)

Method:

1. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, sauté until softened.
2. Stir in the curry powder and cook for 1 minute until fragrant.
3. Add the cubed sweet potato, lentils, diced tomatoes, and coconut milk. Bring to a simmer.
4. Cover and cook for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the lentils and sweet potato are tender.
5. Stir in spinach during the last 5 minutes to wilt.
6. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Garnish with fresh coriander and serve with a side of brown rice or quinoa (optional for extra fibre).



Grilled Chicken with Roasted Brussels Sprouts and Carrots

Ingredients:

- 2 chicken breasts (if tolerated, or substitute with tofu for a plant-based option)
- 1 cup Brussels sprouts, halved (insoluble fibre and prebiotic)
- 1 large carrot, sliced (insoluble fibre)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp garlic powder (prebiotic)
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 lemon (optional, for serving)

Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Toss Brussels sprouts and carrots in olive oil, garlic powder, thyme, salt, and pepper.
3. Spread the vegetables on a baking tray and roast for 20-25 minutes, until tender and slightly browned.
4. While the vegetables roast, season the chicken breasts with salt, pepper, and a little olive oil.
5. Grill the chicken on a medium-high heat grill for 6-8 minutes on each side, until cooked through.

Serve the grilled chicken with the roasted vegetables. Squeeze fresh lemon juice over the chicken and vegetables if desired.

