

Urology Department

Hints for a healthy bowel

Sometimes your bowel does not work properly. Simple life-style changes can often help resolve these problems.

This leaflet highlights good habits to help avoid bowel control problems such as leakage and constipation.

Dietary advice

- Never miss breakfast
- Have a good fluid intake – 1½ - 2 litres a day (2½ - 3½ pints) unless you have a restricted fluid intake for medical reasons
- Eat regularly to encourage a pattern
- Fibre can improve your bowel habits, but too much fibre can make things worse or cause wind
- Include in your diet 5 portions of fruit and vegetables per day

Time

- Have a routine as this benefits your bowel
- Half an hour after a meal is a good time to try to empty your bowel (go for a poo)
- Do not sit on the toilet for a long time
- You should be able to empty the bowel with minimal effort
- Try not to strain
- Allow time and privacy to empty the bowel and relax
- Do not ignore the need to empty the bowel
- Ignoring the need to empty your bowel can make you constipated



Patient Information

Exercise

- Regular exercise may stimulate regular bowel movement

Medication

- Review medication with your GP, consultant or nurse to check if any are aggravating your bowel symptoms

Normal bowel emptying

- This can be anything between three times a day and three times a week

Contact your doctor if:

- You see blood in your stools (poo)
- There is a change in your bowel habit that you cannot explain that lasts more than a few days
- Unexplained loss of weight
- Pain in the abdomen (tummy)
- Pain when emptying your bowel
- You cannot control your stools
- Leakage from back passage (rectum)

How common are bowel control problems?

About 1 in 50 people experience poor bowel control.

There are effective treatments that can improve or cure the condition, for example, pelvic floor exercises. Information is available on this; please ask.

Bowel diseases are not included in this leaflet as these may require medical advice.

Patient Information

Further Information

For further information please contact the Urology Department.

Telephone: 024 7696 5296

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 5296 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

Document History

Department:	Urology
Contact:	25296
Updated:	February 2022
Review:	February 2024
Version:	4.2
Reference:	HIC/LFT/1395/12