

Healthy Poops

What does a normal poop look like? How often does a normal person go? How can I get mine to be normal? Yes, I like to talk about poop and these are some of the questions I get.

Our poop will tell us a lot about the health of our body. When your poop isn't right it indicates that something isn't right. Maybe you ate too much spicy food, are sick with a virus, or you could possibly have a digestive disease or other illness. The process of digestion — eating a food, the food traveling through your stomach and intestines and down to your colon, and then you pooping the digested waste from the food out — involves many aspects of your body, including enzymes, hormones, blood flow, and more. So when just one of the involved organs or systems is off, your digestion really suffers — and that shows up in your poop.

1. How many times per day should I poop?

Generally, going once or twice a day is considered normal. Going every other day is also somewhat normal, as long as you feel comfortable and are not experiencing pain in your abdomen. Above all else, you want to make sure things are pretty consistent from day to day.

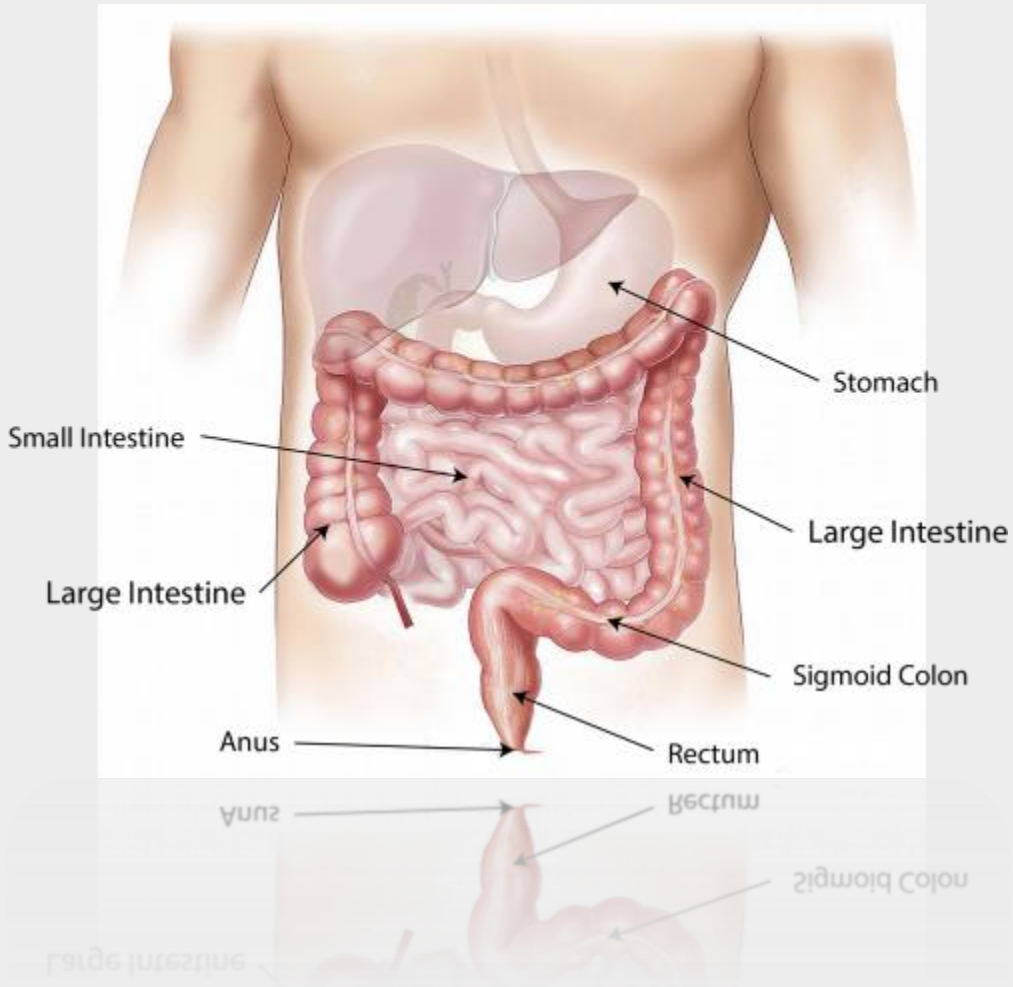
2. What should my poop look like?

When you do go to the bathroom, it's ideal to have a poop that is all connected in one long, smooth "S" shape. Poops like this develop when you're eating enough fiber and drinking plenty of hydrating water.

According to The Bristol Stool Chart, the seven types of stool are:

Type 1: Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)

Type 2: Sausage-shaped, but lumpy



Type 3: Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface
Type 4: Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5: Soft blobs with clear cut edges (passed easily)
Type 6: Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7: Watery, no solid pieces, entirely liquid

Types 1–2: indicate constipation

Types 3–5: considered to be ideal (especially 4), normal poops

Type 6–7: considered abnormal and indicate diarrhea

3. How long should a normal poop take?

A healthy poop doesn't cause pain, break up into multiple little pieces, or take a very long time and lots of pushing to come out. It should feel pretty easy to produce a poop and you should feel like you've emptied your intestines.

What Kinds of Poop Are NOT Normal?

1. Going too often or not often enough
2. Experiencing changes in your poop's consistency
3. If your poop's color is off

Experiencing poops that are black, green, gray, yellow or red in color can be a sign that something deeper is wrong.

Green colored poops usually mean that food is making its way through your digestive tract very quickly, which can be a sign that you are starting to experience diarrhea or have not been consuming enough fiber to slow the transition down within your digestive tract.

Red or purple poop can be somewhat common if you eat a lot of deeply colored vegetables like beets, but if you experience colors like this that you cannot associate with any food you recently ate, you will want to keep an eye on how many days it lasts and possibly see a doctor.

Finally, poop that is grayish or yellow in color is normally a sign that mucus is making its way into your stool. This shows that likely there is a problem with the liver or gallbladder, since the liver is responsible for producing bile that gives stool a grayish/yellow tint.

While you don't want to jump to any conclusions right away and assume the worst when your poop changes color, this is definitely something to see a doctor about and not wait out for too long, because

certain colors can be pointing to possible serious conditions like gallbladder or liver disease, bleeding, gut parasites, and so on.

4 Common Causes of Abnormal Poop

1. High levels of stress

Ongoing stress makes it difficult for many people to relax their body and go to the bathroom properly. Your brain and our gut actually have a very close relationship; they communicate how you are feeling back and forth to each other, working to increase and decrease “stress hormones” depending on your moods, which play a big part in healthy digestion.

In fact, common digestive disorders like Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) are closely correlated with high levels of stress. When we are feeling stressed, our brain communicates these uneasy feelings to our digestive tract, making it very common for the gut wall to either constrict and tense up (causing constipation) or to work overtime and cramp up (causing diarrhea).

While you may not be able to control things like a busy schedule, you can prioritize reducing your stress by making sure you get good sleep each night and by regularly exercising, both of which help to bring down stress hormones levels.

2. Diet Low in Fiber

Fiber is extremely important when it comes to healthy poops; fiber is the binding substance that gives poop its form and helps it to move through the digestive tract. There are two kinds of fiber, both of which play a role in creating healthy poops: insoluble and soluble fiber. The difference between the two is their ability to dissolve in water; soluble fiber is able to dissolve in water while insoluble fiber is not.

If you struggle with ongoing constipation, pay close attention to how much fiber you are consuming daily. Consider swapping some of the foods in your diet that lack fiber- like meat, cheese, refined carbohydrates, and hydrogenated oils- for much healthier, whole foods that provide your body with a lot more benefits. <http://www.genesmart.com/100160/high-fiber-foods-list/>

3. Inflammatory and Autoimmune foods

Unfortunately many people consume common inflammatory and allergen foods on a frequent basis, and these can really mess with the digestive system’s ability to produce normal poops, in addition to creating more serious conditions like leaky gut syndrome and autoimmune disease. If you’re struggling to go to the bathroom normally, try avoiding these inflammatory digestive “common culprits” which may be to blame:

- conventional dairy foods (like cows’ milk, cheeses, and yogurts that are not organic or pasteurized)

- gluten (found in all wheat products, nearly all processed foods, and anything containing rye and barley) which makes any digestive disorders worse
- processed soy (used in foods like soy milk, soy meat replacements, packaged veggie burgers, and many processed foods) which is a high allergen and autoimmune causing food
- high amounts of sugar, which unhealthy bacteria feeds off of in your gut
- also keep an eye on different types of nuts, grains, and shellfish since these are also high allergens and difficult for some people to digest

4. Alcohol & Caffeine

Stress and caffeine can create a range of negative reactions in the digestive tract that depend on the individual person. For example, some people experience an increased need and ability to poop after having caffeine, while others have the opposite problem.

Caffeine and alcohol both dehydrate the colon and a well hydrated digestive tract is crucial for creating healthy, normal poops.

How to Get Your Poop Back to Normal

1. Increase Your Fiber Intake

It's best to aim to get between 25-40 grams of fiber per day. Getting this much fiber shouldn't be too difficult if your diet is made up of real, whole foods- including plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.

Eat all leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and cabbage (try steaming these to make digestion easier), artichokes, peas, all types of beans (which you can also pre-soak and sprout), squash and potatoes, berries, apples and pears (which can be blended as well), figs, dates, chia seeds, flax seeds, and various nuts.

2. Drink Plenty of Water

Aim to consume water every 2 hours at a minimum; drinking 8 oz. every couple of hours will keep you hydrated throughout the day and set you up for a healthier poop the following morning. At least half your body weight in ounces per day.

Whenever you are eating a lot of fiber, you want to also make sure to drink plenty of water. A high amount of fiber, without enough hydrating liquids, can actually result in even more trouble going to the bathroom. Remember that fiber swells and expands in the digestive tract, so if it doesn't have enough water to absorb and to move it through the gut lining, you can experience uncomfortable bloating, gas, pains, and constipation.

3. Probiotics

Probiotics help to create a healthy environment in your gut “microflora”. Essentially this means that the amount of “good bacteria” in your gut is able to balance the amount of “bad bacteria,” helping you to stay free of digestive problems including constipation or diarrhea. Probiotic-rich foods include things like kefir, kombucha, sauerkraut, kimchi and high-quality yogurts.

4. Supplement with Magnesium

If you frequently deal with constipation, magnesium has the natural ability to safely soften poop. It works to draw water from your gut into the poop and helps it to easily move through your system. Magnesium is also a natural muscle relaxer which can help to stop cramping in the gut and abdomen.

Since magnesium is one of the most common nutrient deficiencies in adults, there are really no downsides to trying magnesium, as long as you stick within the recommended daily dosage carefully; if you start experiencing stools that are too loose and watery, you can adjust your intake until its comfortable and back to normal. This is the one I keep on hand. https://www.amazon.com/Natural-Vitality-Magnesium-Stress-Original/dp/B000OQ2DL4/ref=sr_1_4_a_it?ie=UTF8&qid=1528721184&sr=8-4&keywords=magnesium%2Bcalm&th=1

5. Support your Liver!

Did you know that your liver is responsible for producing the bile that digests fat? Without enough bile, your fats become something like soap in your gut! This backs up and can lead to constipation and difficulty detoxing the body of toxins. One of the best ways to support your liver is with diet and exercise! You can also do a liver cleanse to clean everything out and get your body back to feeling its best! I use this one 2 to 3 times per year. <https://www.doterra.com/US/en/blog/science-wellness-detoxification-cleansing>

6. Get Your Body Moving!

Being active is a great way to get your poop cycle on a more regular schedule. Exercise stimulates the bowels and lymphatic system, which helps to push waste down to your colon, making it easier for you to go. On top of this, exercise also relaxes your mind and reduces stress, which as you now know is one of the biggest reasons for digestive troubles.