

How to help constipation

Although laxatives are recommended to treat constipation there are things that you can do to improve the constipation and help prevent it coming back.



Diet

Try and eat as much fibre (roughage) rich foods as you can. Adults need to eat around 30 grams of fibre per day. Most food packaging now shows the fibre content of food so it is easier to work out how much fibre is in the food you eat. Foods rich in fibre include fruit and vegetables as well as cereals and wholemeal bread and pasta. Just to note that eating more fibre may cause some discomfort and bloating at first so it is important to increase it slowly.



Fluids

Try and drink around 2000-2500 mls per day which is about 10 cups. This is particularly important if you are increasing the fibre content of your diet.



Exercise

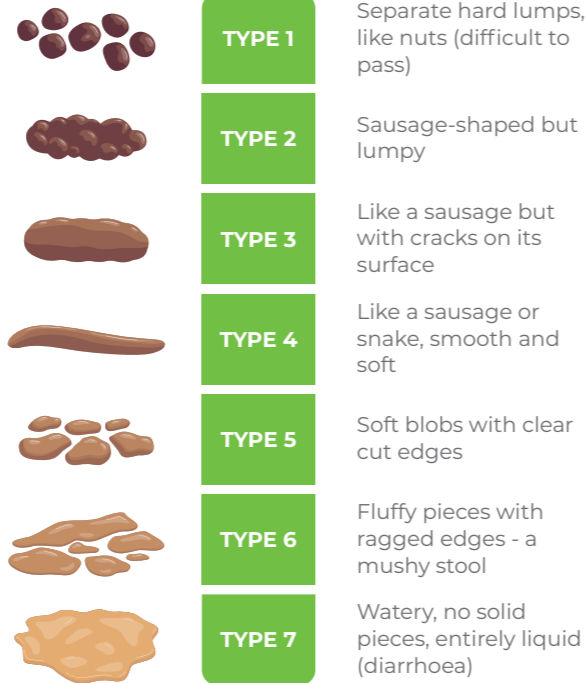
Keeping active and walking can help in some cases.



Keeping regular

Try and take time to go to the toilet regularly to open your bowels. Perhaps get into a routine at a certain time of day – having a warm drink with your breakfast and then sitting on the toilet about 20 minutes later can take advantage of what is known as the gastro—colic reflex and encourage the bowel into a regular pattern of working.

BRISTOL STOOL SCALE



The Bristol Stool Form Scale was developed by researchers at the University of Bristol as a means to evaluate stool form and to identify whether there is a correlation between stool form and intestinal transit time.¹ It remains in use as a simple way for patients and physicians to identify stool form and abnormal bowel behaviour.

References

1. Lewis SJ, Heaton KW. Stool form scale as a useful guide to intestinal transit time. *Scand J Gastroenterol* 1997;**32**:920-924

Further information

For further information on CosmoCol® please speak to your GP, nurse or pharmacist.

You can also get useful information from:

England NHS 111
111 / www.nhs.uk

Scotland NHS 24
111 / www.nhs24.scot

Wales/Galw Lechyd Cymru NHS Direct
0845 4647 / www.nhsdirect.wales.nhs.uk

Northern Ireland NI Direct
www.nidirect.gov.uk

Bladder & Bowel UK
0161 214 4591 / bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk

Down Syndrome UK
www.downsyndromeuk.co.uk
www.positiveaboutdownsyndrome.co.uk

Alternatively, you can contact Stirling Anglian Pharmaceuticals at:

Stirling Anglian Pharmaceuticals Ltd
Hillington Park Innovation Centre
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Always read the Patient Information Leaflet that comes with the pack of medicine.

This Patient Guide has been produced as a service to medicine by Stirling Anglian Pharmaceuticals Limited.



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CosmoColHalf

Macrogol 3350, sodium chloride, potassium chloride and sodium hydrogen carbonate

Patient Guide



CosmoCol® Half 6.9G powder for oral solution - Macrogol 3350 plus electrolytes

(also known as macrogol compound half strength powder)

CosmoCol® Half is a laxative used to treat constipation and comes in powdered form. It has an orange and lemon and lime flavour. Before taking this medicine, please read the information leaflet contained within the packaging.

If you are taking other medications or require thickened fluids then do make sure you have spoken to your doctor or pharmacist before taking CosmoCol® Half as some medications may need to be taken at a different time from CosmoCol® Half.

CosmoCol® Half, like all macrogols, must not be used with starch-based thickeners. This is because macrogols and starch-based thickeners interact and result in thin watery liquid which may not then be swallowed safely.

Each sachet should be mixed with 62.5 mls of water, which is about a quarter of a glass. It is the water that forms the active part of the laxative, so it is very important that it is always mixed with the correct amount.

The water that it is mixed with is not absorbed into the body (it binds with the poo/stool to bulk it up and keep it soft) so should not be included as part of your daily fluid intake.

How to make up CosmoCol®

1



Open the sachet and pour the powder into a glass

2



Add 62.5 mls of water

3



Give it a good stir to help the powder dissolve – this could take a minute or two

4



The made-up solution will look from clear to cloudy

How and when to take

Once made up CosmoCol® Half can be taken at any time with or without food.

The made up CosmoCol® Half solution can be covered and stored in the refrigerator if necessary. It can therefore be given in divided doses if you are unable to take it all at once. However, it needs to be used up within 24 hours and any solution left after that time should be thrown away.

It is best to try and take it at roughly the same time every day, if possible, as that way you are less likely to forget a dose. If you do forget a dose, then take it as soon as you remember but don't take double the dose for any that have been missed.



 Orange, Lemon and Lime

How much to take

Constipation: The recommended dose is 2 to 6 sachets taken in divided doses. It is usually recommended that you start at the lowest dose and increase if necessary. Your healthcare professional will advise you regarding the appropriate starting dose.

CosmoCol® Half works by altering the consistency of the stool as well as how frequently it is passed. The usual aim is for you to be able to have a daily soft formed stool which is easy to pass with no straining.

You may be advised to gradually increase the dose of CosmoCol® Half until the stool is being passed at the right frequency and consistency for you.

CosmoCol® Half like all macrogols, can take 1-2 days to work so you will be advised to not alter the dose too frequently as otherwise it will be difficult to identify the most optimum dose for you to take, if you increase or decrease the dose then do it no more frequently than every other day. This will enable you to see what affect the changed dose has on the consistency of your stool.

The usual length of treatment is around 2 weeks. However, if you have a chronic problem or the constipation is linked to a medical condition your health care professional may advise you to continue with the treatment for longer.

If you need to stay on CosmoCol® Half and you find your stool is becoming too soft or too frequent you will usually be advised to reduce the dose. Alternatively, if you find that your stool is becoming hard, infrequent, or difficult to pass then you may well be advised to increase the dose.



Faecal impaction

Long term constipation can lead to faecal impaction, when the stool collects in your lower bowel and rectum and becomes so large that you are unable to pass it.

Your healthcare professional will advise you if you need to take the disimpaction dose. The recommended dose is 16 sachets which need to be taken within 6 hours.

The sachets need not be taken all at once but can be taken in divided doses throughout the day. For convenience it can be made up all at once in a jug and then kept in the fridge.

It usually takes up to 3 days for your to disimpact. The disimpaction is said to be complete when you have passed a large amount of stool.

Once you have been disimpacted your healthcare professional will advise you if you need to continue with CosmoCol® Half, to prevent to faecal impaction reoccurring, at the maintenance dose. This can vary depending on response but is usually between 2-4 sachets a day.

Side Effects

Like all medicines CosmoCol®, can cause some side effects, although not everyone will experience them. Common ones include bloating, flatulence and nausea. For more information about side effects please read the leaflet included with this medication. If you do experience any side effects, including any not listed, then do speak to your healthcare professional or pharmacist.