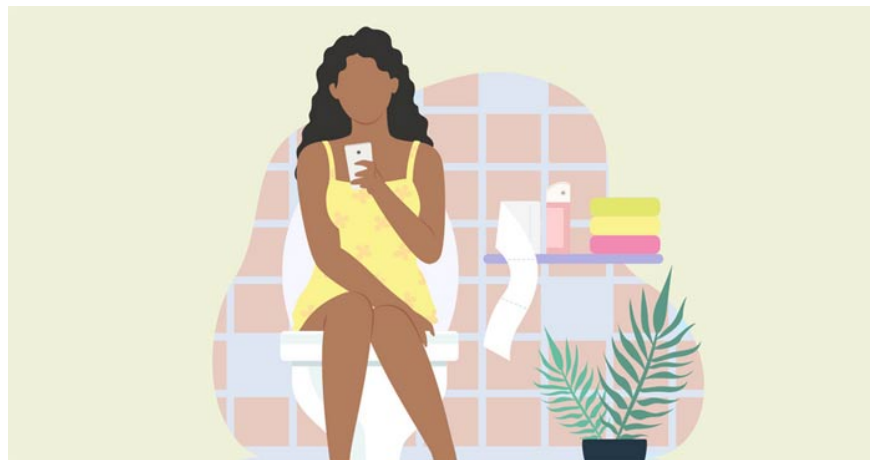


What happens to your body if you don't poop every day?

If you've ever worried that you're not having a bowel movement every day, read on to learn why not having a bowel movement every day might not be so bad and how to recognize when it's a problem.

When it comes to gut health, most people probably think of the goal of having a bowel movement every day. However, experts agree that you can have a healthy gut without having to poop every day. Since everyone's body is a little different, not everyone poops at the same frequency.



' It's okay to not poop every day, because everyone has a different normal way of living. If we think of pooping as taking out the trash, then you need to make sure you poop regularly. So even though you may not poop every day, it's important to be regular, ' says Amanda Saucedo, MD, RDN.

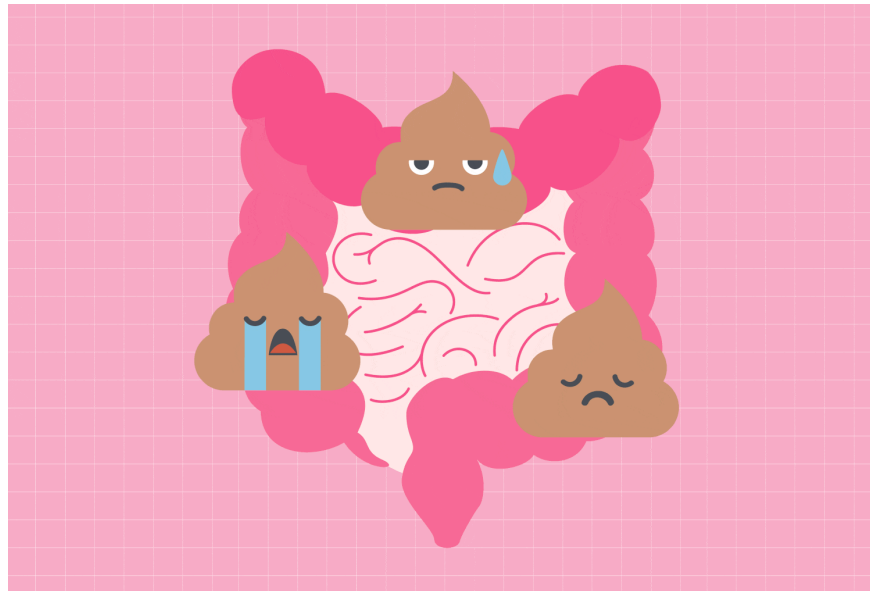
If you've ever worried that you're not having a bowel movement every day, read on to learn why not having a bowel movement every day might not be such a bad thing and how to recognize when it might be a problem.

Is it harmful not to have a bowel movement every day?

No, you don't need to poop every day and your bowels can still be in top condition. " *Bowel habits vary from person to person. Let's say a person has between three bowel movements a week and three bowel movements a day, with soft, formed stools and normal bowel movements. This is considered to be within the normal range of bowel habits ,*" says Sandhya Shukla, MD. There are no negative physiological consequences for healthy people

if they don't poop every day.

So why is there so much variation when it comes to 'normal' bowel habits? There are a number of factors that influence how often a person goes 'heavy,' including diet, hydration, stress, certain medications, and activity levels.



What happens inside the body when you don't have a bowel movement every day?

As soon as we take a bite of food or sip a drink, our digestive system starts breaking it down into essential nutrients. So even though you may not poop every day, there is a lot going on in your intestinal tract. As waste is formed, it builds up in your colon until your body signals it's time to go to the bathroom.

However, if you don't have regular bowel movements, you may start to notice some unpleasant symptoms. First, there's gas and bloating. When stool remains in the intestines, it can ferment, leading to increased gas or bloating. Research suggests that the composition of your gut microbiome plays a role. People who are prone to constipation tend to have different strains of bacteria in their gut microbiome than healthy people.

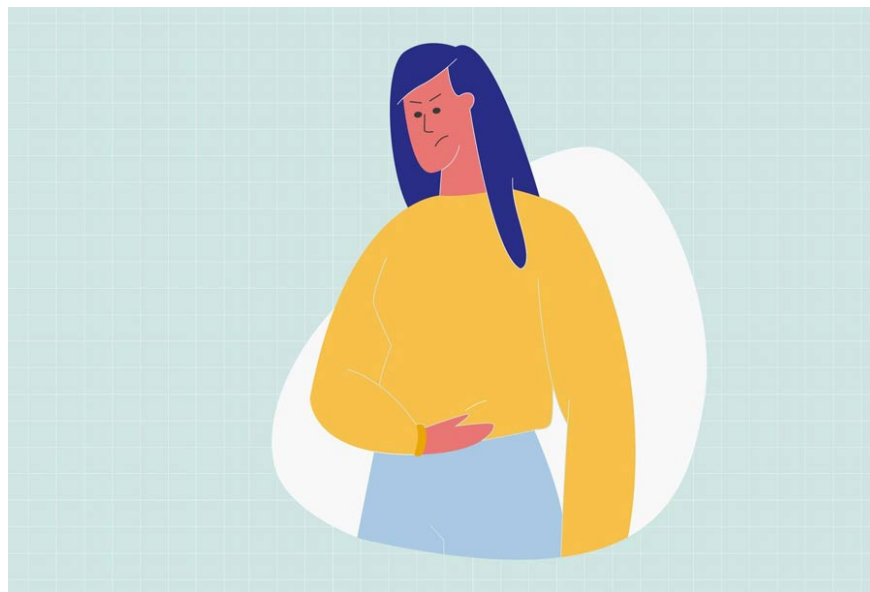
In addition to bloating and gas, you may experience dry, hard stools. When you don't have regular bowel movements, stools tend to become drier and harder. This means you may have difficulty passing stools because hard stools put pressure on your pelvic floor and can lead to hemorrhoids or anal fissures."

So if bowel movements are your body's natural way of eliminating waste, does skipping a day or two make your waste toxic? While this is a basic part of colon cleansing, there is no scientific evidence to support the theory that stool can poison your body if you don't have a bowel movement every day. Your gut microbiome, a key player in your immune system, is well-equipped to protect you. In fact, colon cleansing can wipe out the beneficial gut bacteria you need to maintain healthy bowel habits.

When does holding in bowel movements become a problem?

While 'regular' can mean slightly different things to everyone, healthy bowel movements should meet the following criteria: Stools should be of normal consistency, healthy (but not too hard), brown in color, about 6 to 12 inches long, and 1 to 2 inches in diameter (about the size of a sausage or a peeled banana).

On the other hand, holding in your bowel movements becomes a problem if it lasts longer than three days and you start to feel uncomfortable. The most common symptoms that you are not having bowel movements regularly enough include bloating, excess gas, and stools that are hard, dry, or difficult to pass. Fortunately, you can fix sluggish digestion with a few small changes to your diet or lifestyle.



Tips for easy bowel movements

1. **Hydrate:** We all know we need fiber, but don't forget about water. While fiber is important for digestion, water helps it along. If you don't drink enough water, constipation can get worse.
2. **Stress Management :** Stress can also slow down digestion in the gut, so managing stress can help promote digestion.
3. **Focus on fiber:** Adding fiber-rich foods (such as fresh fruits, vegetables, or supplements like chia seeds and/or ground flaxseeds) to your diet can help a lot in most cases.
4. **Get moving:** Moderate movement and exercise can also help promote healthy bowel movements and regular bowel movements. Just 20 minutes of walking a day (or most days) can make a big difference in bowel movements!
5. **Supplement as needed:** If you've tried increasing your fiber and fluid intake and moving more but still feel uncomfortable, nutritional supplements may help. Magnesium or prune juice are good options to help get your bowels back on track.

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