

FAECAL Bristol stool chart The Bristol Stool Chart, Bristol Poo Chart or Bristol Stool Scale is a medical aid designed to classify stools (known as 'faeces' or 'poo') into seven groups. ON THIS PAGE What is the Bristol Stool Chart? Who uses the Bristol Stool Chart? Why is the Bristol Stool Chart important? Bristol Stool Chart PDF Bristol Stool Chart Recording Sheet What should my stools look like? What does an unhealthy stool look like? BRISTOL STOOL CHART PDF Bristol Stool Chart PDF BRISTOL STOOL CHART RECORDING SHEET If you are looking for a Bristol Stool chart recording sheet, we recommend using our bowel diary in conjunction with the Bristol Stool Chart. WHAT IS THE BRISTOL STOOL CHART The Bristol Stool Chart was developed in 1997 as a clinical assessment tool. There are seven types of stools (faeces) according to the Bristol Stool Chart.

WHO USES THE BRISTOL STOOL CHART? The Bristol Stool Chart, Bristol Poo Chart or Bristol Stool Form Scale is a medical aid designed to classify faeces into seven groups. This chart is used by medical professionals, however it is a great tool for anyone wanting to monitor and improve their bowel movements. Refer to Bristol Stool Chart Recording Sheet. WHY IS THE BRISTOL STOOL CHART IMPORTANT? The Bristol Stool Chart is widely used as a research tool to evaluate the effectiveness of treatments for various diseases of the bowel. The chart is used to describe the shapes and types of stools. It is also used as a tool to diagnose constipation, diarrhoea and irritable bowel syndrome. BRISTOL STOOL CHART TYPES WHAT SHOULD MY STOOLS LOOK LIKE? The type of stool or faeces depends on the time it spends in the colon. After you pass faeces, what you see in the toilet bowl is basically the result of your diet, fluids, medications and lifestyle. You can use the Bristol Stool Chart to check what your stools are telling you. The Bristol Stool Chart shows seven categories of stool. Every person will have different bowel habits, but the important thing is that your stools are soft and easy to pass – like types 3 and 4 below. WHAT IS NORMAL ON BRISTOL STOOL CHART? Type 1-2 indicate constipation, Type 3-4 are ideal stools as they are easier to pass, and Type 5-7 may indicate diarrhoea and urgency. The Bristol Stool Form Scale is also referred to as The Bristol Stool Chart. Some users may also search for The Bristol Poo Chart. WHAT DOES AN UNHEALTHY STOOL LOOK LIKE? Please refer to the Bristol Stool Chart below. Type 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7.

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Reference: Heaton, K W & Lewis, S J 1997, 'Stool form scale as a useful guide to intestinal transit time'. Scandinavian Journal of Gastroenterology, vol.32, no.9, pp.920 - 924. Retrieved on 2/3/2007.

**WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF A HEALTHY BOWEL?** Being 'regular' is a way of describing good bowel habits or normal bowel function. We often talk about our bowels being regular but this is often misunderstood as meaning that you go to the toilet to pass faeces every day. It's common for people to empty their bowel once a day, although it's still normal to be more or less often. Being regular really means that soft yet well formed bowel motions are easily passed and that this happens anywhere from 1–3 times a day to 3 times a week. The bowel usually wants to empty about 30 minutes after a meal (commonly breakfast), but bowel movements can vary from person to person.

**GOOD BOWEL FUNCTION FOR ADULTS** There's more to good bowel function than just being regular. For example, you should be able to: hold on for a short time after you feel the first urge to go to the toilet pass a bowel motion within about a minute of sitting down on the toilet pass a bowel motion easily and without pain – you shouldn't be straining on the toilet or struggling to pass a bowel motion that is hard and dry completely empty your bowel when you pass a motion – you don't have to return to the toilet soon after to pass more.

**BOWEL CONTROL PROBLEMS** People who pass bowel motions at the wrong time or in the wrong place may be experiencing poor bowel control, or faecal incontinence. They may also pass wind when they don't want to. Poor bowel control is more common than you think. About 1 in 20 people experience poor bowel control and it affects both men and women. It's more common as you get older, but young people can also have poor bowel control. In some cases, people with poor bowel control also have poor bladder control and may leak urine (urinary incontinence).

**GOOD BOWEL FUNCTION FOR CHILDREN** Children usually develop the ability to be toilet trained by about three years of age. Soiling is when the bowels are emptied in places other than the toilet. Even after a child is toilet trained, there may be occasional accidents with soiling (poo) in your child's underwear. If a child is unable to be toilet trained or has regular poo accidents after the age of three to four years, then they should be medically assessed. If a child has been toilet trained and at a later stage starts to soil, this also needs medical assessment. How many children get soiling? About 1-3% of children can have this problem and some of them may have wetting as well. It is more common in boys. Soiling may vary from a 'skid mark' to larger amounts that need to be removed from underwear before it can be washed. Why do children soil? In almost all cases soiling happens because the large bowel is not emptying properly and the child is constipated. Constipation is very common and occurs at some time in up to 25% of children. If it is not recognised and treated, bowel actions may become harder and less frequent. Over time, stretching of the bowel makes it less sensitive, so the child may not feel when poo needs to come out and therefore has an accident. It is quite possible that there is hard poo inside the bowel, but the soiling is soft runny poo leaking around the hard mass, and so you don't realise that constipation is the underlying problem.

**SEEK HELP FOR BOWEL PROBLEMS** In many cases incontinence can be prevented, better managed and even cured. Talk to your family doctor or contact the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66. The National Continence Helpline is staffed by continence nurse specialists who offer free and confidential information, advice and support. They also provide a wide range of continence-related resources and referrals to local services. Last Updated: Fri 09, Feb 2024

**Bristol Stool Chart for Healthy Poop** The chart can help you assess whether your stool is healthy or a cause for concern.

Everybody passes stool (poop), but what is considered "healthy" can look different from person to person. Knowing what type of stool you have is an important way to understand your bowel health. You can do so using the Bristol Stool Chart, which sorts stools into seven categories based on appearance and texture. [1] The Bristol Stool Chart indicates that easy-to-pass stool is considered healthy. However, stool that is too hard or too soft can mean you have constipation or diarrhea, respectively. Here's what else you need to know.

**How Is the Bristol Stool Chart Used?** Researchers use the Bristol Stool Chart to understand how quickly food travels through the digestive system and if different treatments work for bowel-related conditions. A healthcare provider uses the chart to understand your bowel movements better. [1] The Bristol Stool Chart numbers stools from 1 to 7, from hardest to loosest. Types in the middle of the chart are considered normal stools. Types 1 and 2 are signs of constipation, while types 6 and 7 are signs of diarrhea.[1] If you notice a change in your stool, a provider may ask you to point to the number on the chart that best matches your stool. This can help them give you an accurate diagnosis for constipation, diarrhea, irritable bowel syndrome, or other underlying conditions. They may also ask you about the color or smell of your stool and take additional tests. **Signs of a Healthy Bowel**

**poop** is stool that is easy to pass. Types 3 and 4 stools are considered to be ideal and healthy. [1] Other characteristics to consider include: **Appearance:** Normal poop should be medium-brown, smooth, and not too soft or firm. **Frequency:** The frequency of bowel movement differs from person to person. Some people may pass stool multiple times a day. Others may only pass stool three times a week. Both of these are considered normal.[3] **Smell:** Smelly poop is also normal. Stool naturally has an unpleasant odor, but the smell should be familiar. [4] However, if your stool smells different than usual, you may want to check in with a healthcare provider.

**What Can Affect Your Bowel Habits?** A few factors can affect your gut health and, in turn, your bowel habits. Those factors include:[5] **Body structure** **Diet** (e.g., not eating enough fiber) **Family and genetic history** **Stress** **Bowel Function in Kids**

However, you want to pay attention to how soft a child's bowel movements are using the Pediatric Bristol Stool Form for Children. The scale numbers stools from types 1 to 5, with types 3 and 4 having the optimal appearance for a child's stool. Type 3 is smooth, soft, and sausage-shaped, while type 4 is slightly mushy and has ragged edges. [6] **Signs of Unhealthy Bowel Function** Constipation and diarrhea are signs of bowel dysfunction and are both relatively common. In a 2018 study that included data from over 71,000 people, 20.2% reported having diarrhea, and 19.7% reported having constipation within a week.[7] Additionally, you may notice you have different colored stools. Though they may result from your diet, stool color changes can sometimes indicate an issue with your bowels.

**Constipation** Types 1 and 2 are stools that are hard to pass. If your stools are like Types 1 and 2, you are likely to be experiencing constipation. Constipation can occur when food passes through your digestive tract too slowly. [8] Other factors that can cause constipation are a lack of fiber intake, water intake, and exercise. Certain medications, vitamins, and not going to the bathroom when you have to go can also lead to constipation. and less fiber in your stools. [10] Type 7 is stool that is completely liquid with no hard pieces. This can be a sign that your digestive system is inflamed.[10] Factors that can result in diarrhea include bacteria from contaminated water or foods, viruses, or parasites. You might also experience diarrhea due to taking certain medications or food intolerances. [11] **Stool Color Changes** A serious condition can sometimes cause a change in the color of your stool. In other situations, the color may change based on what you eat.[12] For example, having black stools may be caused by internal bleeding in the stomach. However, black

licorice, Pepto-Bismol, and iron supplements can also turn stool black temporarily. [13] Additionally, you might experience red, grey or white, and green stools due to health conditions or from something you've eaten. If you're unsure why you have a change in stool color, speak to a healthcare provider to determine the underlying cause. How To Improve Bowel Health A healthy bowel is an important aspect of your overall health. To maintain a healthy bowel or improve bowel function, you can:[14][15][5] Consider using probiotics Eat high-fiber foods Enjoy smaller meals at a slow pace

Use a squatting position if possible—by sitting on the toilet and putting your feet up on a footstool—when you need to have a bowel movement When To Contact a Healthcare Provider Usually, bowel issues like constipation and diarrhea should clear up within a few days. Reach out to a healthcare provider if you experience either condition for longer than three to five days. You should also seek immediate medical care if you experience:[9][11] Blood in your stool Fever Rectal bleeding Severe back or stomach pain Unexpected weight loss Vomiting

A Quick Review The Bristol Stool Chart is a helpful tool you and a healthcare provider can use to understand your bowel health. The seven categories on the chart illustrate what types of stools are healthy and which stools can indicate problems like constipation or diarrhea.

Types of Poop, Color Chart, and More Medically reviewed by Avi Varma, MD, MPH, AAHIVS, FAAFP — By Emily Rekstis — Updated on February 1, 2024 Stool comprises digested food, proteins, bacteria, salts, and other substances produced and released by your intestines. What your poop looks like can be important. Unexpected changes could be a sign of an underlying condition. Characteristics Bristol stool chart Color guide Floating Constipation Medical attention FAQ Poop Color and Texture: What it Means View video transcript We all do it. For some, it's a necessary inconvenience. For others, it's a pleasant and satisfying part of the digestive process. It has fascinated toddlers since time immemorial, and there's a reason for that. Going number two might not be the prettiest topic for a dinner party, but there's much to learn from this mundane yet mysterious process. In the end (no pun intended), it's simply a part of our functioning body. So, what exactly is poop? Although everyone is unique in the size, shape, and smell of their poop, there are a few things that indicate a healthy (or unhealthy) poop. ADVERTISEMENT What does healthy poop look like?


Healthy poop can be as varied and as unique as the individuals who make it. But there are a few general rules to follow if you want to assess your poo artistry for optimum health. Color The poop emoji has one thing right: the brown coloring. The combination of stomach bile and bilirubin, which is a pigment compound formed from the breakdown of red blood cells in the body, gets the credit for this oh-so-lovely shade of brown. Shape A somewhat log-like shape is how most poop should come out due to its formation within the intestines. However, as we'll get to later, there are a variety of shapes that poop can have. When they differentiate from the log shape, that's when your poop is trying to tell you something's up. Size Poops shouldn't come out in small pellets — something else we'll get to later — but instead should be a couple of inches in length and comfortable and easy to pass. Consistency Anywhere between a firm and soft consistency is pretty much normal. If it sways too much one way or another, it could suggest some digestion or fiber issues. Length of time A commonly heard joke is that when someone takes too long in the bathroom, it must mean they're pooping. A healthy poop, however, should be easy to pass and take only a minute or so to push out. That said, some people do spend a bit more time on the toilet, so as a general rule, a poop should take no more than 10 to 15 minutes. Frequency of 24 Fun fact: Did you know most people poop around the same time every day? On average, a person with healthy digestion will poop anywhere between every other day to three times a day. Any less could suggest possible constipation. This means you need some more water to move the "boat." Bristol stool

chart of 24 The Bristol stool chart is an overarching indicator of how and why different types of poops look or feel a certain way. It's broken up into seven categories based on a 2,000-person study published back in 1992, and it makes poop knowledge basic and easy to understand. Type 1: Marbles Appearance: Hard and separate little lumps that look like nuts and are hard to pass. Indicates: These little pellets typically mean you're constipated. It shouldn't happen frequently. Type 2: Caterpillar Appearance: Log-shaped but lumpy. Indicates: Here we have another sign of constipation that, again, shouldn't happen frequently. Type 3: Hot dog Appearance: Log-shaped with some cracks on the surface. Indicates: This is the gold standard of poop, especially if it's somewhat soft and easy to pass. Type 4: Snake Appearance: Smooth and snake-like. Indicates: Doctors also consider this a normal poop that should happen every 1–3 days. Type 5: Amoebas Appearance: Small, like the first ones, but soft and easy to pass; the blobs also have clear-cut edges. Indicates: This type of poop means you're lacking fiber and should find ways to add some to your diet through cereal or vegetables. Type 6: Soft serve Appearance: Fluffy and mushy with ragged edges. Indicates: This too-soft consistency could be a sign of mild diarrhea. Try drinking more water and electrolyte-infused beverages to help improve this. Type 7: Jackson Pollock Appearance: Completely watery with no solid pieces. Indicates: In other words, you've got the runs or diarrhea. This means your stool moved through your bowels very quickly and didn't form into a healthy poop. As with size and consistency, poop's color can be a helpful signal about what's going on within your body. As we previously mentioned, varying shades of brown are considered the norm. Even a hint of green is considered healthy. But if your poop is veering toward other ends of the rainbow, you might want to assess. Black What does a person's poop color mean? If you've had licorice, iron supplements, or bismuth medications (such as Pepto-Bismol), that could be the explanation behind black stool. If you haven't had any of that, black poop could be a sign of bleeding in the upper gastrointestinal tract. It may seem like red would be a more likely color for this sort of concern, but since it's taken a while to travel down, it's older and darker. Green While hints of green are quite normal, if your poop has gone from brown to full green, it may mean one of two things. You've added lots of green foods like spinach to your diet, or your stools are passing through you too fast. When it doesn't pick up as much brown tinting bilirubin, it has more bile salts that turn it this color. Pale, white, or clay If your poop is a chalky light shade, it might mean you're lacking bile. Bile is a digestive fluid that comes from your liver and gallbladder, so if you're producing white stool, it probably means your duct is blocked. Pale poop could also be a side effect of certain medications like anti-diarrhea medicine. Either way, if it continues, consult with a healthcare professional. Red You're probably not surprised to hear that red poop can mean bleeding, either due to hemorrhoids or bleeding in the lower intestinal tract. If your stool is a little red, however, there may be no need to fret immediately. There are other, less serious reasons for this change in color. Foods like beets, cranberries, red gelatin, or tomato juice can turn poop red as well. Yellow Greasy, stinky, yellow stool is typically a sign of too much fat. This could also be a direct relation to a malabsorption disorder like celiac disease, where your body isn't absorbing enough nutrients. If your poop looks bright yellow, it could signify a condition called giardiasis, which is caused by an intestinal parasite in North America and the world. Typically, you can develop giardiasis from contaminated water or exposure to someone with the condition

What does it mean when your poop floats

Now and again, when you take a look in the toilet bowl, you'll see poop bobbing like a toy sailboat in the bathtub. As alarming as this seems, it means that the stool is less dense than the others that sink. One potential reason for this lack of density can come from an increased amount of gas or water or even a high fiber diet.

It's also possible that malabsorption is, once again, the reason for a floating stool. If this is the case, the other abnormalities previously mentioned, like slight constipation, might also be present. Constipation is defined as having fewer than 3 bowel movements per week. There could be many reasons you experience this lack of pooping. Nerve issues in and around the colon or rectum may slow down pooping, as can problems with pelvic muscles. Conditions that affect hormones, like pregnancy or diabetes, could also be the culprit. If you're experiencing this clogged-up feeling, add more high fiber foods to your diet, like beans, vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Drinking fluids, staying active, and managing stress can also help alleviate constipation. If a diet change doesn't seem to get things moving, constipation could be caused by certain medications or even a blockage in the bowel. Talking with a doctor is the best What does constipation mean? ADVERTISEMENT  course of action to find relief in this instance When should you consult with a doctor or other healthcare professional? A green poop here or hard poop there happens to the best of us. When this type of irregularity carries on for more than a day or two, you should take action and talk with a doctor. The same goes for changes in color or consistency or constipation. Chronic constipation can obstruct the bowels, while chronic diarrhea can make it difficult for a person to absorb necessary nutrients from food. Both chronic constipation and chronic diarrhea could even be a sign of more serious conditions. Again, the first sign of either of these should not be immediate cause for concern, but keep an eye on it and see if it lasts more than a few days. That said, pay attention to any signs of blood. If you haven't eaten any of the foods mentioned above that could turn your poop into this color, consult with a healthcare professional as soon as possible. As quick as we are to write it off, our poop can provide a wealth of knowledge about our health and ourselves. So, next time you pop a squat, take note of what's going on. The toilet bowl is a window into your health and you. What do unhealthy bowel movements look like? Unhealthy bowel movements can vary but may include diarrhea (loose, watery stools), constipation (hard, difficult-to-pass stools), or changes in frequency or texture that persist. What does your stool type mean? Stool type can indicate digestive health. Type 1 indicates severe constipation, while type 7 suggests diarrhea. Types 3 and 4 are considered typical, with 4 being the ideal "sausage" shape and smooth texture. What is type 4–6 stool? Type 4–6 stool refers to the Bristol Stool Scale, a tool for classifying stool types. Type 4 is smooth and soft, like a sausage or snake. Type 6 is fluffy with ragged edges, indicating mild diarrhea. What is type 5 stool consistency? Type 5 stool is soft blobs with clear-cut edges, considered a borderline typical stool consistency on the Bristol Stool Scale. What to know about the Bristol Stool Form Scale Medically reviewed by Kelsey Trull, PA-C — By Louise Morales-Brown — Updated on February 20, 2024 The Bristol Stool Form Scale (BSFS), or Bristol stool scale, is a chart that can help classify stools into seven groups. Characterizing the stool based on its consistency can help identify if it is a healthy bowel movement. The bowel is the part of the digestive system that allows people to absorb nutrients from food and expel the waste that the body cannot use. If feces pass too quickly or too slowly, it may indicate a problem with the bowels. This article explains the BSFS and suggests tips to improve bowel health and function

In 1997, Dr. Kenneth Heaton developed the BSFS, a diagnostic tool to help classify stools into seven categories. Healthcare professionals can use the chart as a practical guide in assessing how long a stool has spent in the bowels. The scale uses stool consistency to describe and categorize feces. Dr. Heaton devised the  BSFS as a quick, inexpensive, and reliable way to classify stools visually without the need for laboratory testing. Healthcare professionals can use the BSFS to help assess the condition of the bowel and measure the effectiveness of certain treatments. For example, they may use the BSFS to help diagnose irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). The BSFS is a scale that classifies stools, ranging from the hardest to the softest. Experts consider types 1 and 2 to be uncharacteristically hard and indicative of constipation, while types 6 and 7 are unusually loose and

may indicate diarrhea. Healthcare professionals generally consider types 3, 4, and 5 to be the most typical..

## Types of stools

The BSFS categorizes stool into seven types. Types 1 and 2 Type 1 has the appearance of separate hard lumps, while type 2 is sausage-shaped but lumpy. Both types could indicate constipation, as these stools are hard, dry, and difficult to pass. They may also be darker in color. This occurs when food passes too slowly through the digestive system and the colon absorbs too much water. To help treat [constipation](#), people can consume more fiber, drink more

Individuals may also consider trying over-the-counter (OTC) laxatives for a short time. In more severe cases, a healthcare professional may prescribe medications to soften the stool and encourage the colon to pass feces. Learn more about laxatives for constipation. Types 3, 4, and 5 Type 3 has a shape similar to a sausage but with cracks on the surface, while type 4 has a comparable appearance to type 3 but with a smooth and soft surface. Experts generally consider [these types](#) to be the most healthy and typical stool forms. Type 5 stools are soft blobs with clear-cut edges that a person can pass easily. Some may also consider this type to be typical in those without bowel issues, while others may suggest it is too loose and may imply diarrhea. Types 6 and 7 Type 6 is a mushy stool that appears to consist of fluffy pieces with ragged edges, while type 7 is entirely liquid with no solid pieces. These types of stools may suggest a person is experiencing diarrhea, as the stools are loose. They may also be lighter in color. This is due to passing the stool through the digestive system too quickly and the bowel is unable to absorb water. To help treat [diarrhea](#), individuals need to drink plenty of fluids to maintain hydration and consider taking OTC antidiarrheal medication. For chronic or persistent cases of diarrhea, people can speak with a healthcare professional, who can identify the cause and prescribe appropriate medications. Learn more about treating diarrhea at home

## Signs of a healthy bowel

The bowel consists of the small and large intestines, which both play an important role [in](#) keeping people healthy. They allow the body to absorb

Signs of a healthy bowel can include : regular bowel movements of well-formed (types 3 and 4) stools being able to hold on for a short amount of time after first feeling the urge to pass a stool defecating within roughly a minute of sitting on the toilet passing a stool without any pain or need to strain completely emptying the bowel when having a movement

## How to improve bowel health and function

In addition to having a healthy diet, drinking plenty of fluids, and getting regular exercise, people can try other strategies to improve their bowel health and function. These may include : Bowel training: Individuals can attempt to train themselves to have a bowel movement at consistent times each day. For example, people can try to pass a stool shortly after eating breakfast. It is also advisable for a person to allow plenty of time and use the bathroom as soon as they feel the need to go. Positioning: Maintaining appropriate toilet posture may make it easier for individuals to have a bowel movement and avoid straining. This typically involves relaxing, placing the feet on a footstool to ensure the knees are higher than the hips, leaning forward, bulging out the abdomen, and straightening the spine. Changing medications: If a person suspects that a medication or supplement may be affecting their bowel movements, they should discuss this with their healthcare professional. They may be able to change the dose or suggest a different medication. Dietary changes: As well as

eating more fiber, it may be beneficial for people to consider avoiding foods and drinks that may irritate their stomachs. This may include alcohol, caffeine, and fatty foods. However, before making any drastic dietary changes, it is advisable to speak with a medical professional.

#### When to speak with a doctor

If a person is persistently passing stools at either end of the BSFS or switching from one end of the scale to the other, it is advisable that they consult with a healthcare professional. A healthcare professional can help identify the potential cause of abnormal bowel movements and recommend suitable treatments to allow an individual to pass regular and healthy stools. The BSFS is a diagnostic tool that people can use to classify their stools based on their appearance. The chart ranges from type 1 (hard) to type 7 (loose) and may identify problems with bowel movements through the shape and consistency of the stool.

Everything you need to know about pebble poop Medically reviewed by Kelsey Trull, PA-C — By Zawn Villines — Updated on September 10, 2023 Pebble poop is when poop appears as small, hard, separate lumps. It can also appear as a solid piece that looks as though it consists of pebbles. Both types are a sign of constipation.

Constipation is a common problem <sup>1</sup> that most people experience from time to time. Chronic constipation can be painful and may indicate an underlying health problem. In this article, learn about the causes of pebble poop, as well as the possible treatments and home remedies.

#### Symptoms

Pebble poop, or pellet-like stool, may occur when very hard stool breaks apart into smaller pieces. This breakage can happen during digestion, or it may take place in the anus immediately before a person has a bowel movement. It can be more difficult to pass these small pellets than a normal stool, and a person may strain to pass stool. Most people have a regular bowel movement pattern, passing stool from three times a day <sup>2</sup> to once every 3 days. People with longer digestion periods and less frequent pooping may develop hard stools. When food passes through the digestive system, the colon absorbs <sup>3</sup> some of the water that the food contains. Food that passes more slowly than usual spends too much time in the colon. As a result, the colon absorbs too much water, and the stool may become hard. <sup>4</sup> Some other symptoms <sup>5</sup> that a person might experience in addition to pebble-like stool include: straining to poop abdominal bloating stools that feel too large to pass the feeling that some stool remains left behind, even after a bowel movement The Bristol stool form scale is a tool that helps people classify stool appearance.

#### Causes

Hard, pebble-like stool is a sign of constipation <sup>6</sup>, which can happen for many reasons. Certain lifestyle and dietary factors can make constipation worse. For example, constipation is more prevalent in seniors <sup>7</sup> due to the changes in muscle tone and nervous system function that typically occur with age. An older adult who does not eat enough fiber or takes medications that may cause constipation has an even higher risk of hard

Anxiety: Children and toddlers may not poop when they feel anxious or when there is a major change in their home or bathroom routine. Toilet training children may refuse to poop if their parents or caregivers are punitive or too aggressive with toilet training. Medications: Certain medications and dietary supplements may make constipation worse. These include antacids containing aluminum and calcium, anticholinergics, antispasmodics, anticonvulsants, calcium channel blockers, diuretics, iron supplements, narcotics, some antidepressants, and certain



medications for Parkinson's disease. Gastrointestinal problems: Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and other conditions that affect the stomach and intestines may cause constipation. Some people with food sensitivities also experience this symptom. Physical injuries: Spinal cord injuries, damage to the bowels, and muscle injuries to the pelvic floor — such as those resulting from childbirth — may make it difficult for a person to have a bowel movement. This delay can slow digestion and cause pebble poop. Chronic illnesses: Many chronic illnesses can cause constipation by affecting nerve or muscle function. Diabetes, hypothyroidism, and colon cancer are conditions that may cause this symptom. Lifestyle: A sedentary lifestyle may increase the risk of constipation, especially for people with other risk factors. Other lifestyle changes like becoming pregnant, traveling, and changes in diet may cause constipation. Diet: Low-fiber diets may cause pebble poop and constipation. Some people develop pebble stools when they do not drink enough water.

### Home remedies

If the symptoms are mild or the constipation is not chronic, a few lifestyle changes may help a person treat pebble poop at home. Medication can also help them manage occasional hard stools. These strategies may help .

Eating more fiber: High-fiber foods may help soften the stool. Adult women require 22-28 grams (g) of fiber daily, while men need about 28-34 g each day. Fruits and vegetables are rich in fiber.

Drinking more water: For some people, pebbly stools are a sign of dehydration. Trying a stool

softener: Stool softeners reduce the amount of water the colon absorbs, making stools easier to pass. Using an over-the-counter constipation medication: These drugs can speed up digestion.

Constipation medications may also make hard stools easier to pass. Exercising: Exercise can improve the strength of pelvic floor muscles and support muscle tone in the abdomen and throughout the body, making it easier for a person to have a bowel movement.

### Medical treatments

When a person has chronic constipation or a serious underlying medical condition, symptoms may only improve with medical treatment. A doctor may prescribe prescription medications such as lubiprostone, linaclotide, or prucalopride. However, the right treatment will depend on the reason why a person has constipation. For example, a person with pelvic floor dysfunction may not have sufficient strength to pass stool, slowing digestion and causing pebble poop. A doctor may recommend pelvic floor physical therapy. For people with IBS, a doctor may advise eliminating possible trigger foods from the diet one by one to see if this helps resolve the symptoms. If a person identifies a particular food that seems to cause issues, they can avoid or limit their intake. Biofeedback therapy may also be recommended if a person is having problems with the muscles that control bowel movements. This therapy involves a person learning to control their muscles through the use of electronic devices and a coach.

### Pebble poop in children and babies

Pebble poop can be distressing for babies and young children. They may fear that passing the stool will hurt, and they might refuse to have a bowel movement. Parents and caregivers should seek treatment for children with chronic constipation or persistently hard stools. People can try these home remedies to help an infant or child pass hard stool: Giving the child plenty of water and reassuring them that drinking more water may help. Ensuring the child eats plenty of high fiber foods like fruit and vegetables. Encouraging the child to get enough physical activity through walking, playing catch, or biking, for example. Getting the child into a routine of regularly sitting on the toilet or potty around the same time every day, ideally after a meal. Asking the child if they feel

worried about using the potty or toilet, or if there are certain environments they feel uncomfortable doing this (such as school or playschool) Staying calm and reassuring, as displaying anger or stress can intensify a child's anxiety about having a bowel movement. Using a reward system ☑ when the child uses the bathroom regularly. It is essential not to give constipation medication to a baby or child without first talking with a doctor. ☑ The following strategies may help babies: Moving the baby's legs in a circle as though pedaling a bicycle while the baby lies on their back. This movement can stimulate the muscles and bowels and may help the baby's bowel movement. Giving the baby a gentle tummy massage while they're lying down.

If the baby is on solids, make sure they're getting enough fiber – apples, pears, and prunes are particularly good for constipation.

## Summary

Hard, pebble-shaped poop is a common frustration. The occasional pebble poop usually means that a person did not get enough fiber or water that day. Minor stomach problems and infections can also temporarily slow digestion, causing constipation. When pebble poop lasts for days or weeks, however, it may be a sign of a serious problem. Chronic hard stools can also be very painful, triggering anxiety about having a bowel movement. In many cases, a quick consultation with a doctor can help resolve the problem. Even when the cause of pebble poop is more serious, prompt medical care can stop the problem from getting worse.

## The Scoop on Poop: What Does Your Poop Say About Your Health?

Everybody poops. We've been taught this since childhood, but sometimes, people aren't comfortable talking about it. Poop may not be a topic fit for dinner table conversation, but it's a completely normal — and essential — bodily function. Plus, it can tell you a lot about your health. A bowel movement is the last stop your food makes as it goes through your digestive tract. Sometimes called stool or feces, your poop is what's left of your food and drink after your body absorbs important nutrients. What and how you eat affects your digestive system, and sometimes, your bowel movements can change simply because of changes in your diet. Other times, changes in bowel movements signify something more serious. What's "normal" depends on each individual person — but there are some signs you can look for that mean something may be off. Here are some other ways your poop may be able to tell you about your health.

### What Does It Mean When Your Poop Changes Color?

vegetables can turn your poop green. Also, food coloring can change the color of your poop. In these cases, it's OK if your poop isn't quite so brown," explained Nitin Ahuja, MD, MS, physician at Penn Gastroenterology Perelman. Other times, there may be something else going on that's causing your poop to change color. Light-Colored Poop If your poop is light-colored, yellow, clay-colored, or very light brown, this may be a sign of: Black Poop "Your poop can become black if you eat foods such as black licorice and blueberries or if you're taking iron supplements. However, it can also be an indicator of bleeding or tumors in your digestive tract," warned Dr. Ahuja. Red Poop Blood in your stool can cause your poop to appear red. A tiny bit of bleeding can be a result of constipation, or if you're a woman having her period, but it can also be a sign of: • An infection or inflammation (swelling) in your gallbladder, liver, or pancreas • Alcoholic hepatitis, which is inflammation in your liver caused by alcohol consumption A blockage in the bile ducts, the part of your digestive system responsible for moving a fluid called bile from your liver and gallbladder to your small intestine. Such

blockages may be caused by gallstones or narrowing of the ducts themselves. • • Bleeding in the rectum or anus • Abnormal blood vessels • Blood supply being cut off to parts of your digestive system • Swelling in the lining of your stomach • Food or a foreign object being stuck in your digestive system Cancer of parts of your digestive system 4/6/24, 2:34 PM Page 3 of 7 Your primary care provider can determine if there are any problems with your digestive system by performing a physical exam and lab or imaging tests

What Does it Mean if You're Pooping Too Often or Not Enough? Dr. Ahuja explained, "There isn't a set amount of times you should poop — it's different for everyone, and some people may poop every day, while others may poop every other day. The important thing is staying regular. If your pooping habits seem to suddenly become more or less frequent, that can be a cause for concern." Diarrhea If your poop is loose and watery and you have to go more than three times in one day, that's diarrhea. Not only can it be inconvenient, it can mean that your body is trying to get rid of something in your digestive system

Some causes of diarrhea are: • Bacteria or parasites (tiny organisms) from contaminated food or water • Viruses such as the flu, norovirus, or rotavirus • Medications with magnesium, such as antibiotics or antacids Food intolerances, which are when your body has a hard time digesting certain ingredients. One common food intolerance is lactose intolerance — when your body has difficulty processing a carbohydrate found in dairy products. • • Diseases of your stomach, small intestine, or colon, such as Crohn's disease • Problems with your colon, such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)

"Diarrhea is a common problem, and it usually goes away on its own. If it lasts more than a few days, though, it can be a sign of a more serious problem, and you should see your primary care provider," said Dr. Ahuja. Diarrhea in children — especially infants — can be particularly dangerous because they can get dehydrated quickly and become very sick. Every once in a while, diarrhea can be normal, but it's important to monitor it. You should not hesitate to see your child's primary care provider right away if you're concerned.

Constipation Poop that's hard, dry, and/or painful to pass is called constipation. If you only have three or fewer bowel movements per week, constipation could point to issues with your diet., Some causes of constipation are

- A diet low in fiber, which is a nutrient found in foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains • Dehydration • A lack of exercise or physical activity • Medications such as antidepressants or opioids

"You don't need to poop every day — but if your bowel habits change or are causing you pain, talk to your primary care provider. Also, use laxatives only if your physician tells you to, as they can further disrupt your digestive system if not used properly," said Dr. Ahuja. What About Other Changes in Your Poop?

Floating Poop If your poop never seems to sink in the toilet bowl, that can be a reflection of your diet and certain health conditions. Floating poop can be caused by:

- Poor absorption of nutrients — called malabsorption • Too much gas, which can occur with a change in your diet • A gastrointestinal infection • Pancreatitis

Usually, floating poop isn't a cause for concern on its own. However, if you have other symptoms, such as significant weight loss, talk to your primary care provider to see what's going on

**Foul-smelling Poop** Your poop may not smell like flowers, but the odor of your poop should be familiar. If it's suddenly extremely bad smelling and has you running for the air freshener each time you go to the bathroom, this can be a sign of a problem. Foul-smelling poop can be caused by:

- Celiac disease
- Crohn's disease
- Chronic pancreatitis, which is inflammation of your pancreas
- Cystic fibrosis, a genetic disease that can affect your lungs, pancreas, liver, kidneys, and intestines
- An intestinal infection, which can be caused by a virus, bacteria, or parasites in your intestine
- Malabsorption

If you didn't make any major changes to your diet and your poop suddenly has a strong odor, talk to your primary care provider.

**Monitor Your Pooping Habits** Dr. Ahuja concluded by saying that, "The most important thing to remember is to be on the lookout for any changes in your bowel movements. If your poop is suddenly more or less frequent, or looks significantly different, don't ignore these changes." Regularity is a good thing when it comes to poop, and you should make sure to get to your physician's office if anything seems a bit ... stinky.

### Anal Fissures

These are small tears in the skin around the anus, usually caused by constipation and hard stools. Along with bright red blood, you might notice pain during bowel movements and afterward. You can add more fiber to your diet or take a stool softener to ease the problem. A warm bath might help, too. If it doesn't get better, your doctor can give you a cream to soothe the area.

### Polyps

Benign growths in your colon don't usually cause bleeding during bowel movements, but it's possible and can happen slowly over time. Other symptoms include changes in the color of your stool and changes in your bowel habits that last longer than a week or two. Polyps can turn into cancer, so it's key to find and remove them before they do. Make sure you know when it's time to get a colonoscopy and other cancer screening tests

### Colorectal Cancer

Blood can be a sign of a tumor in your colon or rectum. You might see bloody streaks in your poop, or notice that it is dark-colored, a sign of bleeding higher up in your digestive system. Often, though, you can't see blood on your own, but your doctor may find traces of it with a screening test. Other colorectal cancer symptoms include diarrhea or constipation, belly pain or cramps, bowel movements that are narrow, and fatigue. You'll need surgery, and possibly chemotherapy or radiation, to treat this condition.

### Inflammatory Bowel Disease

This condition includes Crohn's disease (inflammation in any part of your digestive tract) and ulcerative colitis (inflammation in your colon and rectum). Both can cause blood during bowel movements, pain, weight loss, and diarrhea. Your treatment will focus on lowering inflammation, pain relief, and controlling diarrhea. Usually, medicines and changes to your diet and other

**Diverticulosis/Diverticulitis** Diverticulosis means that small pouches form in the walls of your intestines. When one of them gets infected, you have diverticulitis. Other than blood on toilet paper or in the bowl, symptoms can include cramps, fever, nausea, changes in your bathroom habits,

diarrhea, or constipation. Antibiotics and a change in diet might solve your problem. But if your case is severe, you might need surgery.

Peptic Ulcers .These open sores in the lining of your stomach and intestines can cause dark 4/6/24, 2:31 PM Page 26 of 30 blood to show up in your poop. But it doesn't happen to most people with ulcers. The most common symptom is pain. You also might have heartburn, burp a lot, or feel nauseated. Treatment can include antibiotics and medicine to block acid. You may need to limit your use of nonsteroidal anti inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), since they can be hard on your stomach. Important: If your stool looks black and tarry and you feel lightheaded, get emergency help

## Urine Health

Abstract Frequent monitoring of hydration status may help to avoid the adverse effects of dehydration. Other than urine color assessment, hydration assessment methods are largely impractical for the general population and athletes to implement on a routine basis. Despite its widespread use, the validity of urine color as an indicator of hydration status has not been systematically evaluated. The objective of this systematic review is to determine the validity of urine color evaluation as a hydration status assessment method in the general adult population, older adults, and athletes. Using the PRISMA guidelines, electronic databases were searched to identify original research articles of all study design types for inclusion. Of the 424 articles screened, 10 met inclusion criteria. Most studies compared urine color to either urinary specific gravity or urine osmolality, and reported significant associations ( $r$ ) ranging from 0.40 to 0.93. Lower correlations were noted in studies of adults aged >60 years. Studies generally reported a high sensitivity of urine color as a diagnostic tool for detecting dehydration and supported the ability of this method to distinguish across categories of hydration status. Research is needed to determine if clinicians, patients, and clients can accurately utilize this method in clinical and real-world settings. Future research is also needed to extend these findings to other populations, such as children. Key teaching points Inadequate hydration can lead to impairments in physical performance and cognitive function. Methods used to assess hydration status include plasma/serum osmolality, urinary specific gravity (USG), urine osmolality (Uosm), change in body weight, urine volume, and urine color. Urine color assessment is a practical method that is routinely used in clinical, athletic, and other settings. The validity of this method has not been systematically evaluated. Available research was limited to 10 articles. Validity of this method was generally supported; however, research has not investigated the validity of this method by clinicians, patients and clients.

Symptoms The regular color of urine varies. It depends on how much water you drink. Fluids dilute the yellow pigments in urine. So the more you drink, the clearer your urine looks. When you drink less, the yellow color becomes stronger. But urine can turn colors far beyond what's typical, including: Red. Blue. Green. Orange. Dark brown. Advertisement Policy Opportunities Mayo Clinic does not endorse companies or products. Advertising revenue supports our not-for-profit mission. Advertising & Sponsorship Ad Choices Products & Services A Book: Mayo Clinic Family Health Book, 5th Edition Show more products from Mayo Clinic Cloudy white. When to see a doctor See your health care provider if you have: Blood in your urine. This is common in urinary tract infections and kidney stones. Those problems often cause pain. Painless bleeding might be a sign of a more serious problem, such as cancer. Dark or orange urine. This can be a sign that the liver isn't working correctly, especially if you also have pale stools and yellow skin and eyes.

## Causes

A change in urine color is often caused by certain medicines, foods or food dyes. Sometimes it's caused by a health problem. Here are some unusual urine colors along with things that can cause them. Keep in mind that colors can look slightly different to different people. For instance, what looks red to you might look orange to someone else.

**Red or pink urine** Red urine isn't always a sign of a serious health problem. Red or pink urine can be caused by:

- Blood.** Health problems that can cause blood in the urine include an enlarged prostate, tumors that aren't cancer, and kidney stones and cysts. Some cancers can cause blood in urine too.
- Hard exercise,** such as long-distance running, also can cause this bleeding.
- Foods.** Beets, blackberries and rhubarb can turn urine red or pink.
- Medicines.** A tuberculosis medicine called rifampin (Rifadin, Rimactane) can turn urine reddish-orange. So can a medicine for urinary tract pain called phenazopyridine (Pyridium). Constipation drugs that contain the medicine senna also can bring on this color change

**Orange urine** Orange urine can be caused by:

- Medicines.** Phenazopyridine and some constipation medicines can turn urine orange. So can sulfasalazine (Azulfidine), a medicine that lessens swelling and irritation. Some chemotherapy medicines for cancer also can make urine look orange.
- Vitamins.** Some vitamins, such as A and B-12, can turn urine orange or yellow-orange.
- Health problems.** Orange urine can be a sign of a problem with the liver or bile duct, mainly if you also have light-colored stools. Dehydration also can make your urine look orange.

**Blue or green urine** Blue or green urine can be caused by:

- Dyes.** Some brightly colored food dyes can cause green urine. Dyes used for some kidney and bladder tests can turn urine blue.
- Medicines.** A medicine for depression called amitriptyline can make urine look greenish-blue. So can a treatment for ulcers and acid reflux called cimetidine (Tagamet HB). A water pill called triamterene (Dyrenium) also can turn urine greenish-blue. Urine can turn green due to a medicine for pain and arthritis symptoms called indomethacin (Indocin, Tivorbex). Green urine also can be caused by propofol (Diprivan), a strong medicine that helps people sleep or relax before surgery

**Health problems.** A rare disease called familial benign hypercalcemia can cause children to have blue urine. Urinary tract infections caused by a certain type of bacteria can cause green urine.

**Dark brown or cola-colored urine** Brown urine can be caused by:

- Food.** Eating lots of fava beans, rhubarb or aloe can cause dark brown urine.
- Medicines.** Some medicine that can darken urine are: Chloroquine and primaquine, which treat and prevent malaria. The antibiotics metronidazole (Flagyl, Metrocream, others) and nitrofurantoin (Furadantin, Macrobid, others). Constipation medicines that contain senna (Senokot, Ex-Lax, others). Methocarbamol (Robaxin), a muscle relaxer. The seizure medicine phenytoin (Dilantin, Phenytek). Medicines called statins that lower cholesterol.
- Health problems.** Some liver and kidney disorders and some urinary tract infections can turn urine dark brown. So can bleeding inside the body called a hemorrhage. A group of illnesses that mainly affect the skin or the nervous system, called porphyria, also can cause brown urine.
- Extreme exercise.** A muscle injury from extreme exercise can cause tea- or cola-colored urine. The injury can lead to kidney damage

**Cloudy or murky urine** Urinary tract infections and kidney stones can cause urine to look cloudy or murky.

**Risk factors** A change in urine color that isn't due to foods or medicine could be caused by a health problem. Some things that put you at risk of health problems that can affect urine color are:

- Age.** Tumors of the bladder and kidney, which can cause blood in the urine, are more common in older people. Men older than 50 sometimes have blood in the urine due to an enlarged prostate gland.
- Family history.** If any of your blood relatives, such as a parent, sibling or grandparent, have kidney disease or kidney stones, you're more likely to get them too. Both kidney disease and kidney stones can cause blood in the urine.
- Hard exercise.** Distance runners are most at risk. But anyone who exercises hard can have blood in the urine

The color of your urine changes with your hydration level but may also change due to pigments in your food or from taking certain medications. Some color changes may signal a health condition that needs medical attention. Doctors refer to the standard color of your urine as “urochrome.” Urine naturally carries a yellow pigment. When you stay hydrated, your urine will be a light yellow, close-to clear. If you’re getting dehydrated, you’ll notice that your urine is becoming a deep amber or even light brown. Sometimes your urine color can indicate a health condition you must address.

## Urine colors

Urine colors can vary depending on what you eat, any medications you’re taking, and how much water you drink. Many of these colors fall on the spectrum of what “normal” urine can look like, but there are cases where unusual urine colors may be a cause for concern

### Clear urine

Clear urine indicates that you’re drinking more than the daily recommended amount of water. While being hydrated is a good thing, drinking too much water can rob your body of electrolytes. Urine that occasionally looks clear is no reason to panic, but urine that’s always clear could indicate that you need to cut back on how much water you’re drinking. Clear urine can also indicate liver problems like cirrhosis and viral hepatitis. If you’re not consuming large amounts of water and have ongoing clear urine, you should see your doctor. Yellowish to amber urine The color of “typical” urine falls  $\approx$  from light yellow to a deeper amber color. The urochrome pigment naturally in your urine becomes more diluted as you drink water. Urochrome breaks down hemoglobin, the protein that carries oxygen in your red blood cells. In most situations, the color of your urine will depend on how diluted this pigment is. Having a lot of B vitamins in your bloodstream can also cause urine to appear neon yellow

**Red or pink urine** **Foods:** Urine may look red or pink if you eat fruits with naturally deep pink or magenta pigments, like beets, rhubarb, or blueberries. **Medical conditions:** While red or pink urine might be from something you ate recently, there are sometimes other causes. Some health conditions can cause blood to appear in your urine, a symptom known as hematuria, including enlarged prostate, kidney stones, and tumors in the bladder and kidney. **Medications:** Medications that may turn your urine a reddish or pink hue include senna or senna-containing laxatives, phenazopyridine (Pyridium), and the antibiotic rifampin  $\approx$  (Rifadin). Speak with a doctor if you’re ever concerned about blood in your urine. **Orange urine** The following things can cause your urine to look orange: **Dehydration:** If your urine appears orange, it could be a symptom of dehydration

**Medical conditions:** If you have orange urine and light-colored stools, bile may get into your bloodstream because of issues with your bile ducts or liver. Adult-onset jaundice can also cause orange urine. **Medications:** Medications that can cause your urine to look orange may include phenazopyridine (Pyridium), the anti-inflammatory drug sulfasalazine (Azulfidine), and chemotherapy drugs. **Blue or green urine** In general, blue urine is rare and most likely connected to something in your diet. **Food:** Blue or green urine can be caused by food coloring, especially a dye called methylene blue. This dye is in many types of candy and some medications. **Medications:** Medications that can cause blue or green urine include  $\approx$  cimetidine (Tagamet), amitriptyline, indomethacin (Indocin), promethazine (Phenergan), and vitamin B supplements. **Medical procedures:** It can also result from dyes in medical tests performed on your kidneys or bladder

**Medical conditions:** The *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* bacterial infection can also cause your urine to turn blue, green, or indigo purple. A condition called familial benign hypercalcemia can also cause blue or green urine. Low to moderate calcium levels may appear in your urine and change color

when you have this condition. Many people with this genetic condition don't have symptoms that they notice. Dark brown urine In most cases, urine that's dark brown indicates dehydration. Medications: Dark brown urine can also be a side effect of certain medications, including metronidazole (Flagyl) and nitrofurantoin (Furadantin), chloroquine (Aralen), cascara or senna based laxatives, and methocarbamol. Foods: Eating large amounts of rhubarb, aloe, or fava beans can cause dark brown urine. Medical conditions: Brown, tea-colored urine could be a symptom of rhabdomyolysis, a breakdown of muscle tissue that is a serious medical condition. A condition called porphyria

can cause a buildup of the natural chemicals in your bloodstream and cause rusty or brown urine. Dark brown urine can also indicate liver disease, as it can be caused by bile getting into your urine. Exercise: Intense physical activity, especially running, can cause dark brown urine, known as exertional hematuria. This isn't considered unusual. When your urine is dark because of exercise, it'll typically resolve with some rest within a few hours. If you frequently see dark brown urine after exercise, or if your urine doesn't return to normal after 48 hours, you should speak with a doctor about possible underlying causes.

The following are things that can cause your urine to appear cloudy: Medical conditions: Cloudy urine can indicate a urinary tract infection. It can also be a symptom of some chronic diseases and kidney conditions. In some cases, cloudy urine is another sign of being dehydrated. Pregnancy: If you have cloudy urine and are pregnant, it could be a sign of

a dangerous condition called preeclampsia. You should contact your healthcare professional immediately and let them know if you develop cloudy or bubbly urine during pregnancy. Cloudy urine: Urine with foam or bubbles is called pneumaturia. This can be a symptom of serious health conditions, including Crohn's disease or diverticulitis. There are some cases where urine is foamy, and doctors can't determine the cause. What does kidney failure pee look like? If you're in kidney failure, your urine may be varying shades of these colors: dark amber red brown Note that dark yellow urine may also mean that you're dehydrated, and your urine may also turn red after eating beets or foods with dyes. Some medications may change your urine color as well.

What are the three early warning signs of kidney disease? Many people have no signs or symptoms of kidney disease until it has progressed. However, there are a few signs and symptoms of kidney disease. They are often subtle and may include: changes in your urine, such as: making less urine needing to pee more often seeing blood in your urine foamy urine insomnia feeling tired having trouble concentrating swelling in your arms and/or legs swelling in your face – especially around your eyes muscle cramps What color is urine in stage 2 kidney disease? There are generally no symptoms or only mild symptoms in stage 2 kidney disease, so your urine may be its typical yellow color. You may have more protein in your urine (proteinuria or albuminuria) if you have

kidney disease, even in stage 2, and that can make your urine foamy. You may have to flush more than once. For some people, there may be small amounts of blood in their urine (hematuria), making it more of an amber or darker yellow color. What color is urine with stage 3 kidney disease? In stage 3 kidney disease, there may be protein or blood in your urine, and it may be foamy, dark amber, pink, or reddish in color. In most cases, abnormal urine colors are simply a result of dehydration, something you ate, or a side effect of medications you're taking. Urine should resume its typical

coloring within 2 to 3 days after you notice an unusual color. If your urine is cloudy, brown, blue, or green and doesn't return to a pale straw color, schedule an appointment to speak with a doctor



What The Color of Your Pee Says About You Urine has been a useful tool of diagnosis since the earliest days of medicine. It can tell a lot about what's going on in your body, from how hydrated you are to whether you might have a urinary tract infection.

Here's a look at some of the things it can tell you from urologist Petar Bajic, MD. What color should urine be? Your urine is a mix of water, electrolytes and waste that your kidneys filter out from your blood. When you're healthy and hydrated, your urine should fall somewhere between colorless and the color of light straw and honey. When you don't consume enough Quids, your urine becomes more concentrated and turns a darker yellow or amber color. "It's completely normal for the color of your urine to vary a little day by day," says Dr. Bajic. "But it should stay within a certain range of yellow." But what about when the color changes and moves to other sections of the crayon box? First, relax: There may be a simple explanation. Certain foods, antibiotics, laxatives and dyes can temporarily turn your urine a different hue. Of course, that attention-grabbing color may be a sign of a bigger issue, too: "If you see something really unusual, don't just ignore it," says Dr. Bajic. So let's explore what is normal and what deserves some extra attention.

**No color (transparent)** Clear urine sends a clear message: You may be drinking too much water. Now it's true your body needs water to stay hydrated and function properly. The basic rule of thumb is to aim for drinking 64 ounces of liquid a day to keep your system operating at peak efficiency. Surging over that total can make your urine start to look like the water you're guzzling down. (Plus, you're going to be making a lot of trips to the restroom as your body works to drain out all that extra Quid.) An occasional clear pee isn't a big deal. But if it's an ongoing issue you may be lowering salt and electrolyte levels below what your body needs

What if your urine is clear and you're not knocking back glass after glass of water? That may signal an underlying kidney problem or diabetes. In this situation, it's best to see a doctor to get answers

**Pale straw- to a dark yellow-colored** Good news! You're in the preferred section of the urine color chart. Urine that falls in the pale yellow category signals that you're healthy and hydrated, says Dr. Basic. That yellowish color, by the way, is caused by a pigment called urochrome produced by your body. **Amber- or honey-colored** Darker urine is your body talking to you. What's it saying? Basically, drink some water, says Dr. Bajic. The darker hue is a sign of mild dehydration. Basically, your urine is a more concentrated mix due to a lower-than-needed level of Quid in your system. This can happen if you've been outside sweating on a hot day or just finished a workout. Refill your tank and the color should go back to normal.

**Syrup- or brown ale-colored** Your dehydration level just crossed a line into a more worrisome status. Get Quids in ASAP. A flow that's dark brown also could be caused by bile getting into your urine, a sign of liver disease. Rusty or brown-colored pee also is a symptom of porphyria, a rare disorder affecting the skin and nervous system. If rehydrating doesn't lighten up your urine, see your doctor

**Pink- to reddish-colored** The explanation for this unexpected turn on the color wheel could be as simple as what you ate, notes Dr. Bajic. If beets, blueberries or rhubarb passed through your lips within the last day or so, you may be seeing the results. If you haven't eaten anything like that, though... well, there may be a reason for concern. Pink or reddish urine could be a sign of: Blood in your urine. Kidney disease. Cancers of the kidney or bladder. Kidney stones. A urinary tract infection. Prostate problems. Lead or mercury poisoning. Contact your doctor as soon as possible if the color doesn't return to yellow.

**Orange-colored** You may not be drinking enough water if your pee looks orange. Or you could have a liver or bile duct condition. Or it could be food dye or medications.

Rehydrate first and contact your doctor if the orange color doesn't disappear

Blue- or green-colored OK ... this is definitely different

Most likely, it's the result of something you ate (think heavily dyed foods) or a medication, says Dr. Bajic. However, a rare genetic disease involving hypercalcemia can turn your urine blue or green. Ditto for certain bacteria that can infect the urinary tract. See your doctor if you continue to urinate this color.

**Cloudy urine** Urinary tract infections and kidney stones can cause urine to become cloudy. Once again, too, dehydration also could be the culprit. Drink plenty of water and call your doctor if the symptoms persist

**Foaming or fizzing urine** The explanation here could just be basic hydraulics, says Dr. Bajic. Basically, you're emptying a lot out of your bladder and stirring up toilet water a bit more than usual with a heavy and intense stream. However, foaming or fizzing also could indicate excess protein in your diet or a kidney problem. See a doctor if this happens consistent.

**Final word** You can tell a lot just from looking at your urine. But medical professionals can tell a lot more from doing the kind of sophisticated analysis that comes with a urine test during a regular physical examination. You're not just putting urine in that cup when you visit the doctor's appointment. You're providing information — and that can be one of the best things you can do for your health

There's so much talk about what we put into our bodies, but we should also talk about what comes out. Understanding your toilet habits is more beneficial than you may think. It's an indicator of your gut health and can signal that something might not be right with your body. Before you flush your number 2s, have a look at them to gain valuable insight into your health. Not sure what to look for? Here's a guide to help. So, what can my poo tell me? Amazingly, your poo (stool) can provide clues about what's going on with your diet, fluid intake, medication use and lifestyle. Your poo can reveal if:

you're drinking enough water ☐ you're experiencing a food intolerance or allergy ☐ you're under a lot of stress ☐ you're not eating enough fibre ☐ you have worms or a parasite ☐ you have damage to your gastrointestinal tract ☐ you're experiencing digestive and absorption issues ☐ the health of your organs has changed, such as your kidneys or gallbladder ☐ you need to get checked for certain cancers such as bowel cancer ☐ you're taking certain medication or supplements

**What does a healthy poo look like?** You want the colour of your poo to range from light brown to dark brown. The shape and texture should be like a snake or sausage. This consistency reflects a healthy gut microbiome and digestive system. Your digestive system includes the digestive tract and other organs that help the body break down and absorb food. Your gut microbiome lives in the digestive tract and is made up of good and bad bacteria. A healthy gut microbiome means there are more good than bad bacteria. This can help to support your immune system, regulate your weight and play a role in the production of happy hormones that influence your mental health. A healthy number of toilet breaks vary. It can be from a minimum of 3 times a week to a maximum of 3 times a day, and you shouldn't have to strain to pass stool (do a poo). To work out if your poo is healthy, you can examine the colour, shape and texture

**Colour** The colour of your poo can depend on what you eat and drink, medications and the time food has spent in your digestive system.

Black may indicate certain medication use, like iron supplements, or undigested food. [2] Light to dark brown may indicate an ideal and healthy stool. [2] Pale or clay may indicate coeliac disease or pancreas issues. [2] Orange may indicate blocked bile ducts or antacid usage. [2] Yellow or green may indicate a fatty diet, parasite or stress. [2] White spots or mucus may indicate medication use or problems absorbing food. [2] Dark to light red may indicate blood in the stool, or that you've recently eaten beetroot.

When should I see my doctor? A change to your stool won't always mean that you should be worried, but you should monitor it. If you have diarrhoea or constipation for more than 2 – 3 days, your stools are black, tarry, very light pale or grey in colour, or you see blood in your stool,

Your urine can tell you a lot about your health and your habits. Urine is produced when blood passes through the kidneys, which filter out excess waste and water. This waste travels through tubes known as ureters and is stored in the bladder until you urinate. Urine is roughly 95 percent water, and the rest is composed of thousands of compounds — both inorganic and organic — exiting the body. Certain changes in your urine or urine habits, either during or after urination, may indicate that you have a medical condition. These signs often include:

Dark or discolored urine Cloudy urine Blood in urine.

What Do the Smell and Color of My Urine Tell Me? Changes in the smell and color of your urine are typically harmless, but sometimes, they can indicate a medical problem. Normal, healthy urine is usually mildly yellow with a slight odor.

Urine can range in odor for various reasons

Forty percent of people can smell a change in urine after they eat asparagus, sometimes called "asparagus pee." [2] Dehydration can produce an ammonia-like odor. [3] Fruity-smelling urine can be a sign of type 2 diabetes. [4] Foul-smelling urine can indicate bacteria from an infection. [4]

Urine can also vary in color for a variety of reasons:

Clear urine is a sign of good hydration and potential overhydration. Pale yellow urine is an indicator of good hydration. Dark yellow urine is a sign to drink more fluids. Amber-colored urine can indicate dehydration. Orange urine can be caused by various foods or medications or be a sign of potential liver problems. Pink or red urine can be caused by foods or medications, or it can also be a sign of blood in the urine. Blue or green urine can be caused by medications or food dyes, but it can be a sign of bacteria or the rare condition known as blue diaper syndrome, too. Dark-brown urine can be a sign of liver or kidney problems

White urine can occur when your body contains excess calcium or phosphate, or it may indicate a urinary tract infection

You should always consult with your doctor if you notice a sudden change in the color or odor of your urine.

What Causes Urine to Be Cloudy?

Cloudy urine can be an indication of a variety of medical conditions:

Dehydration Cloudy pee can indicate that you are not getting enough water and other fluids

Urinary Tract Infection Blood, pus, or excess white blood cells can cause cloudy or milky urine and can indicate that you have a urinary tract infection.

**Sexually Transmitted Infections** STIs can produce an excess of white blood cells, which can cause cloudy urine.

**Kidney Stones** High levels of minerals in urine can cause cloudiness and be a sign of kidney stones

**Diabetes** Cloudy urine can indicate that uncontrolled diabetes.

**Prostate Issues** An inflamed or infected prostate can lead to an increase in the amount of white blood cells or other discharge, which can cloud urine

**Vaginitis** A vaginal infection can increase the number of white blood cells released in urine and cause cloudiness.

**Why Is There Blood in My Urine (Hematuria)?** Blood in urine, also known as hematuria, occurs when red blood cells leak from your urinary tract. Blood in urine can indicate that you have an undiagnosed or untreated medical condition.

Sometimes blood in urine is visible, appearing clotlike or turning the urine pink, red, or brown. Other times it can be viewed only with a microscope (called microscopic hematuria).

Conditions that cause blood in urine can include:

Bladder or kidney stones Kidney disease or injury Enlarged prostate Urinary tract infections

If you notice or suspect blood in your urine, contact your healthcare provider as soon as possible. Your doctor will conduct a urinalysis and various other tests to determine the cause of the bleeding and any appropriate treatment.

**What Does Painful or Burning Urination Mean?** Painful or burning urination can often be the first sign of an undiagnosed medical condition. The most common cause of painful urination is a urinary tract infection, which occurs when bacteria infect the bladder, urethra, or kidneys. Additional causes of painful urination can include: [15] [16] Inflammation of the vulvar region Inflammation of the urethra

**What Are the Possible Reasons for Frequent Urination?** Frequent urination can be disruptive to sleep, work, hobbies, and your mood. Frequent urination is not always a sign of a medical problem. As you age, the bladder loses some of its holding capacity, and you may have to urinate more frequently. Frequent urination is also common during the first and third trimesters of pregnancy

Diseases affecting the urinary tract, such as a urinary tract infection, can also cause frequent urination. Infection affects the bladder's capacity to hold urine, and it can also affect the functioning of the urethra or kidneys. Poorly managed or uncontrolled type 1 (<https://www.everydayhealth.com/type-1-diabetes/guide/>) or type 2 diabetes (<https://www.everydayhealth.com/type-2-diabetes/guide/>) can also cause frequent urination, when increased blood sugar causes more fluid to escape the kidneys into the urine. Prostate problems are the most common reasons that men age 50 and older struggle with frequent urination. If you suffer from frequent urination, your doctor may conduct a urinalysis and other tests to determine the cause. Antibiotics are used to treat urinary infections, and there are special prescription medications used to treat an overactive bladder. Your doctor may also recommend that you reduce fluid intake before you go to bed.

**How Does Your Urine Change When You're Pregnant?** Urine changes throughout pregnancy, and monitoring your urine can help your doctor ensure both you and your baby are healthy. A urine test can detect pregnancy around two weeks after conception by measuring increased levels of the

hormone human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG) (<https://www.everydayhealth.com/drugs/hcg>). Urinating more frequently can also be an early sign of pregnancy and will occur throughout the first trimester. Frequent urination returns during the third trimester when the growing fetus and uterus put increased pressure on the bladder.

Pregnant women also need to drink more water, so dark and more concentrated urine can be a sign of dehydration. Pregnant women are also at increased risk of developing urinary tract infections, which can cause cloudy pee and blood in the urine. UTIs carry increased risks to the mother and fetus during pregnancy, so it's important to get the infection treated as soon as possible. A urinary infection can also be a sign of group B streptococcus, a bacterium that can spread to a baby during delivery and cause complications. Women are typically tested for GBS during their third trimester.

**Proteinuria: What Does Protein in the Urine Mean, and How Is It Tested?** Proteins serve many functions in the body, but when proteins escape into urine, it can be a sign of potential kidney problems. It's normal to have a small amount of protein in your urine, and temporarily higher levels can be caused by exercise, dehydration, stress, fever, or cold temperatures. If high levels of protein are detected multiple times, you may have kidney disease. People with diabetes and hypertension have a higher risk of developing kidney disease, so their urine may be analyzed regularly via urinalysis. Protein in urine (<https://www.everydayhealth.com/urine/protein-urine-proteinuria-causes-symptoms/>) can also be a sign of preeclampsia in pregnant women. If kidney disease is caused by hypertension or diabetes, treatment will involve getting these medical conditions controlled and monitored. Treatment may also include lifestyle changes and prescription medication, including angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors (ACE inhibitors

**Urine Therapy: Is Drinking Your Own Pee Good for You?** Urine therapy, or urotherapy, is a type of alternative medicine in which people use or ingest their own urine for medicinal purposes. But there is no scientific evidence that urine therapy provides medicinal value. When you drink urine, you ingest all the waste that your kidneys have filtered out of your body. Therefore, drinking urine can make your urine more concentrated with waste, causing dehydration and kidney damage. So drinking your urine is generally not recommended as a survival technique. **What Is Maple Syrup Urine Disease?** Maple syrup urine disease is a rare genetic disorder in which an infant's body cannot properly process amino acids (<https://www.everydayhealth.com/amino-acids/guide/>) found in proteins. This causes urine to have a sweet-smelling odor, much like maple syrup. It affects roughly 1 in 185,000 infant

The more serious form of the disease can be detected in newborns, and other times the onset of symptoms is delayed until late infancy or childhood. Additional symptoms of maple syrup urine disease can include

Trouble feeding Lethargy Seizures Vomiting

If untreated, the condition can lead to neurological damage, coma, and even death. Treatment typically involves a diet low in certain amino acids and sometimes requires dialysis. If your family has a history of maple syrup urine disease, talk to your doctor about genetic counseling. Trouble feeding Lethargy Seizures Vomiting [36

Most people take note of the color of their urine and notice that it can change from day to day. This is a good habit, because your pee can provide some clues about your health and what's going on inside of your body. And the color of your urine can tell you more than just your hydration status.

Brown pee, in particular, is common and can mean several different things — ranging from harmless to more serious. So let's review some of the different causes of brown urine and what to do when it happens. What can my pee say about my health? The color of your urine can change depending on several factors, from hydration status and medications to underlying medical conditions. What color should urine be?

Urine gets its yellow color from urobilin or urochrome, a chemical that is produced when your body breaks down red blood cells. Your kidneys then remove this chemical from the blood, combine it with water, and excrete it as urine. Generally, the more water that you drink, the paler your urine will be. Drinking too much water may cause your urine to appear clear. Darker yellow means that you may not be drinking enough fluids. Although urine generally varies between lighter to darker yellow, it can also take on many different hues for different reasons. Here, we'll discuss common reasons why your pee may turn brown. What causes brown pee? Brown pee isn't always a cause for concern. If the color is between light brown and dark yellow, it may mean that you are just a little dehydrated. Even certain foods can give a brown tint to your urine, like rhubarb, asparagus, or fava beans. Someone who is menstruating may also have urine that appears brown when blood mixes in. This is most common at the start or end of menstruation, when the blood can appear more brown than red. There are also certain medications that can turn your pee brown. These include: Senna, a common over-the-counter laxative Phenytoin (Dilantin), an anti-seizure medication Levodopa, a medication for people with Parkinson's disease Antibiotics, such as nitrofurantoin (Macrobid) and metronidazole (Flagyl) Antimalarial medications, like chloroquine and primaquine

Iron supplements These cases are often the cause of brown urine, which aren't a reason for concern. But sometimes brown urine can be a sign of something more serious going on

Are there any serious causes of brown pee? There are several health conditions that can lead to brown urine. Some are temporary and treatable, but there are also long-term and potentially serious causes. We'll review a handful of these conditions. Urinary tract infection

Urinary tract infection (UTI) may lead to darker colored urine for different reasons. In most cases, the color change is due to blood in the urine. This can occur when bacteria cause bleeding as they invade and inflame the lining of your urinary tract. Liver disease Liver disease, such as cirrhosis or hepatitis, can lead to dark urine. This occurs when there are abnormally high levels of bilirubin in the urine, which is a waste product that the liver typically breaks down. If you have brown urine due to liver disease, you'll likely have other symptoms from your condition. Some examples are: Extreme fatigue Jaundice Nausea or vomiting Abdominal pain or distention Weight loss Swelling of the legs Kidney disease There are several kidney conditions that can result in brown urine. These include: End-stage kidney disease or kidney failure: Brown urine can result from the buildup of waste products that occurs when the kidneys aren't functioning normally. Post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis: This is a very rare

complication of strep throat that's more common in children. Kidney stones: As stones move down the urinary tract, they tend to irritate the lining and lead to bleeding. Rhabdomyolysis

Rhabdomyolysis is a condition that occurs when there's a significant amount of muscle breakdown, like after intense exercise. As muscles break down they release myoglobin, a dark-colored substance that you excrete in your urine. During rhabdomyolysis, you'll likely experience significant body and muscle pain, as well as swelling in the arms and legs. Cancer The most common cancer that can lead to brown urine is renal cell carcinoma, which can cause blood to leak into the urine. Melanoma can also cause melanin, a dark pigment, to leak into the urine. But this is extremely rare. What should I do if I notice my pee is brown? If you notice a dark hue to your urine, but you otherwise feel well, a

good step is to start hydrating. If the dark color clears and you don't have any other symptoms, it's safe to say you'll be OK. But if your pee is still dark after you drink a good amount of water, you should watch for signs that something more serious is going on. It's a good idea to see your provider if you experience any of the following: Fever, which can be a sign of infection

Muscle aches or pain Persistent vomiting or diarrhea Abdominal or flank pain Fatigue or disorientation Even if you don't have any of these symptoms, and your urine color doesn't improve within hours when you're better hydrated, you should reach out to your provider for further evaluation. The bottom line It's completely normal to check out the color of your urine. In fact, it's one of the many ways to keep daily tabs on your health. A variation in the color and shade of urine is normal. If your pee turns brown, don't be shy to talk to your provider about it. And if you have other new symptoms with your brown urine, it's best not to delay evaluation. The Unmentionables is a series that focuses on common curiosities about our bodies that, at some point, have been labeled as taboo, shameful, or embarrassing. But these are important questions we all have about our health, and we should be able to ask them. This series aims to dispel the stigma, normalize the discussion, and openly address these important health topics.

Occasionally, stool may be flat, squarish, or stringy. These changes are often the result of diet. However, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic constipation, and other conditions may cause long-term changes in stool shape.

Poop should generally resemble the place from which it comes: the intestines. It is [usually](#) slightly rounded, like a sausage, and smooth, with some cracks on the surface.

It can be concerning if stools are suddenly not "normal." Most of the time, however, a change in appearance is short-lived and nothing to worry about.

### **Is flat poop a problem?**

Share on Pinterestwenzdai figueroaTemporary changes to the shape or color of stool are common and not necessarily a sign of illness. Sometimes, they stem from the person's diet. For example, foods containing colorings can change the [color](#) of poop. An excess of fatty foods can lead to oily or greasy poop, and eating too little [fiber](#) can likewise give stool an unusual appearance.

If the changes only last for one or two bowel movements, or even a couple of days, they are likely no cause for concern.

However, if changes in stool shape or color last longer or accompany other symptoms, the cause may be an underlying condition that requires medical attention.

## Causes

While changes in the color or appearance of stool often stem from the diet and are temporary, some underlying health issues can cause more lasting changes.

Below, we describe some conditions that may cause flat poop:

### Irritable bowel syndrome

[Irritable bowel syndrome \(IBS\)](#) refers to a group of gastrointestinal symptoms that occur without any visible signs of damage or disease in the digestive system.

Symptoms [include](#) [Trusted Source](#):

- [stomach pain](#)
- [bloating](#)
- [gastroesophageal reflux](#)
- [gas](#)
- needing the toilet urgently
- whitish [mucus in stool](#)

Treatment may include:

- eating more fiber
- avoiding [gluten](#)
- switching to the [low FODMAP diet](#)

[Learn more about the signs of IBS here.](#)

## Constipation



[Constipation](#) involves having fewer bowel movements than usual or having hard stool that is difficult to pass.

Symptoms [include](#) [Trusted Source](#):

- small, hard, pellet- or [pebble-like](#) stool
- stomachache
- cramping
- gas
- [frequent belching](#)
- bloating
- no bowel movements for several days

Treatment may [include](#):

- avoiding triggering foods
- drinking more fluids
- taking [laxatives](#)
- taking [stool softeners](#)
- taking [fiber supplements](#)

[Find home remedies for constipation here.](#)

## Diarrhea

[Diarrhea](#) is the passage of loose or watery stools [several times a day](#) [Trusted Source](#). It may also involve pain or discomfort.

Symptoms [include](#) [Trusted Source](#):

- an urgent need to use the bathroom
- cramping

- a [loss of control](#) of bowel movements
- [nausea](#)
- pain in the abdomen

Treatment may involve:

- taking over-the-counter diarrhea medication
- treating the underlying cause
- replacing lost fluids and [electrolytes](#)

[Learn how to stop diarrhea fast here.](#)

## Colorectal cancer

Changes in the shape of stool can be one sign of [colon](#) or rectal cancer. If a [tumor](#) grows in either area, it can change the shape of the bowel and cause stool to be flat or thin and pencil-like.

Symptoms [include](#) [Trusted Source](#):

- [blood in the stool](#)
- [darker stool](#), indicating bleeding further up the gastrointestinal tract
- feeling the need to have a bowel movement and no relief afterward
- diarrhea, constipation, or other changes in bowel habits that last more than a few days
- [weakness](#) and [fatigue](#)
- [unintended weight loss](#)
- [vomiting](#)

Treatment may include:

- surgery to remove the cancerous cells

- [radiofrequency ablation](#)[Trusted Source](#), which involves killing these cells with a probe containing tiny electrodes
- cryosurgery, which freezes and destroys the abnormal tissue
- [chemotherapy](#), which involves stopping cancer's growth with drugs
- [radiation therapy](#)[Trusted Source](#), which involves using high energy X-rays, for example, to kill cancerous cells or keep them from growing
- targeted therapy, which involves attacking cancerous cells, without harming regular cells, using drugs or other substances
- immunotherapy, which involves using the immune system to fight the cancer

It is important to remember that the earlier a doctor diagnoses cancer, the better the likelihood of successful treatment.

[Learn more about colorectal cancer here.](#)

## Other potential causes

Anything that may cause the colon or rectum to narrow may also cause flat poop. These issues include:

- [fecal impaction](#) — a partial blockage or impaction of waste in the intestines or rectum
- [hemorrhoids](#) — swollen veins in the lower rectum or anus
- trapped abdominal hernias
- [colon polyps](#)
- a distended, or stretched, colon
- [food poisoning](#)

## What to try at home

The best approach depends on the cause of the issue. Some home care techniques involve:

## **Fiber**

If constipation causes flat stool, eating more fiber-rich foods can help.

Foods with high fiber content include whole grains and many fruits and vegetables. Leave the skins on, when possible.

[Learn about high fiber foods here.](#)

## **Water**

Drinking lots of water can ease the passage of stool, making it less likely to be flat.

[Learn about the symptoms of dehydration here.](#)

## **Exercise**

Some types of physical activity may have a positive impact on gastrointestinal problems.

Activities such as walking, yoga, aerobic exercise, and tai chi may help improve physical and mental health-related symptoms of IBS, according to [research from 2019](#)[Trusted Source](#).

## **Low FODMAP diet**

[FODMAP](#)[Trusted Source](#) stands for “fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides, and polyols.” These are short-chain carbohydrates that can be poorly absorbed by the small intestine and can cause gastrointestinal symptoms.

[Evidence](#)[Trusted Source](#) supports the use of a low FODMAP diet in the treatment of IBS.

[Learn more about the low FODMAP diet here.](#)

## **When to consult a doctor**

Flat poop is rarely a cause for concern. However, a person should seek medical advice if any of the following symptoms occur:

- blood in stool
- dark stool
- pus or mucus in stool
- [high fever](#)
- abdominal pain or cramping
- sudden, prolonged constipation
- pooping more or less often than usual
- drastic changes in the consistency of stool

Overall, if thin or flat stool occurs for more than 3 days, even without any of the above symptoms, a person should consider contacting a doctor.

## **Frequently asked questions**

Here are some questions people ask about flat poop.

### **Is flat poop normal?**

Flat poop is not usually a cause for concern. However, people should speak with a doctor if they have blood in their stool or persistent changes in bowel habits for no clear reason.

### **What can flat poop mean?**

Flat poop can be a sign of constipation, diarrhea, irritable bowel syndrome, an enlarged prostate, or colorectal cancer. Stool can also change in color and consistency according to the diet.

## Summary

Bowel movements naturally vary from day to day, and these temporary changes are usually nothing to worry about.

However, prolonged changes can indicate an underlying health issue. If flat poop occurs for more than 3 days, seek medical advice. It may be wise to do so earlier if there are other symptoms.

Last medically reviewed on January 10, 2023

- [Colorectal Cancer](#)
- [Constipation](#)
- [Irritable Bowel](#)

Colon cancer is one of the most common types of cancer. It originates in the colon or rectum and is medically known as colorectal cancer, though most people shorten it to colon cancer. While it is currently one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths, it is preventable. It's also easier to treat when found early.

The colon, also known as the large intestine, is a long, tube-like organ that plays a crucial role in digesting food. It absorbs water and nutrients from the food you eat and helps form waste into stool. The colon is divided into several sections, including:

- the ascending colon
- transverse colon
- descending colon
- sigmoid colon

The rectum is the last portion of the large intestine, connecting the colon to the anus. It serves as a storage area for stool before it is eliminated from the body. When stool enters the rectum, it triggers the urge to have a bowel movement.

Together, the colon and rectum are responsible for processing and eliminating waste from the body, helping to maintain overall digestive health.

## How Can Colon Cancer Affect Stool?

When it comes to colon cancer, subtle changes in bowel habits and stool characteristics can be important signs. Paying attention to these changes can help you spot potential problems early so that you can get proper medical help.

In healthy individuals, stool is typically brown and has a soft, well-formed consistency that is easy to pass.

Variations in consistency, including diarrhea and constipation, may indicate the presence of a bowel condition or, in some instances, colon cancer. Some variations to be aware of include:

- **Pebble stool.** Pebble stool refers to small, hard, and lumpy feces. While this can be a sign of constipation, persistent occurrences, particularly if accompanied by other symptoms such as abdominal pain or blood, may indicate a blockage within the colon.
- **Pencil-thin stool.** Pencil-thin stool is unusually long and thin, which can indicate there is a narrowing of the colon due to a cancerous tumor.
- **Flat stool.** Abnormally flattened or ribbon-like feces characterize flat stool. Tumors that change the shape of the colon or rectum can create this type of stool.
- **Mucus in stool.** Mucus is a gel-like substance secreted by the intestines that aids in stool passage through the colon. While a small amount of mucus in stool is considered normal, an excess should be examined, especially if accompanied by other symptoms.
- **Blood in stool.** Take it seriously if you notice blood in your stool or bright red bleeding from your rectum. This could signify pre-cancerous polyps or cancerous tumors in your digestive tract. As your stool passes through, it can mix with blood, making it appear dark brown or black.

It is important to remember that these symptoms can often be caused by other digestive issues and underlying conditions, including:

- [Inflammatory bowel disease](#)
- Constipation
- [Hemorrhoids](#)
- Enlarged prostate
- Anal fissures

For this reason, if you experience any changes in your bowel habits, seek a comprehensive medical check. Your doctor may suggest screening or diagnostic procedures such as a [colonoscopy](#).

## What Is a Colonoscopy?

Colonoscopies are an excellent tool for both detecting and preventing colorectal issues, and they are typically performed as a part of routine screening or if there are concerns about digestive health.

It is a minimally invasive medical procedure where a doctor uses a long, flexible tube with a camera on the end to examine the inside of your colon. The procedure allows your doctor to check for any abnormalities, such as polyps or signs of colorectal cancer.

Regular [colon cancer screenings](#) are essential for individuals aged 45 and above or those with a family history of the disease to potentially detect and treat colon cancer early. Understanding these [warning signs of colon cancer](#) and following routine screening practices can lessen the risks associated with colon cancer.

Early detection is key to successful treatment and improved outcomes – [Schedule your appointment](#) today.

## What causes narrow stools? Should I be concerned?

Answer From Elizabeth Rajan, M.D.

Narrow stools that happen now and then probably are harmless. But in some cases, narrow stools — especially if pencil thin — may be a sign that the colon is narrowing or has a blockage. And that could be due to colon cancer.

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) also may cause changes in the size of your stools. IBS can cause stools to be smaller, larger or narrower than usual. It also causes changes in the consistency of stools.

Check with a healthcare professional if you notice any changes in the appearance of your stool that last longer than 1 to 2 weeks. Get medical help right away if your bowel changes happen with rectal bleeding or severe belly pain.

With

Elizabeth Rajan, M.D.

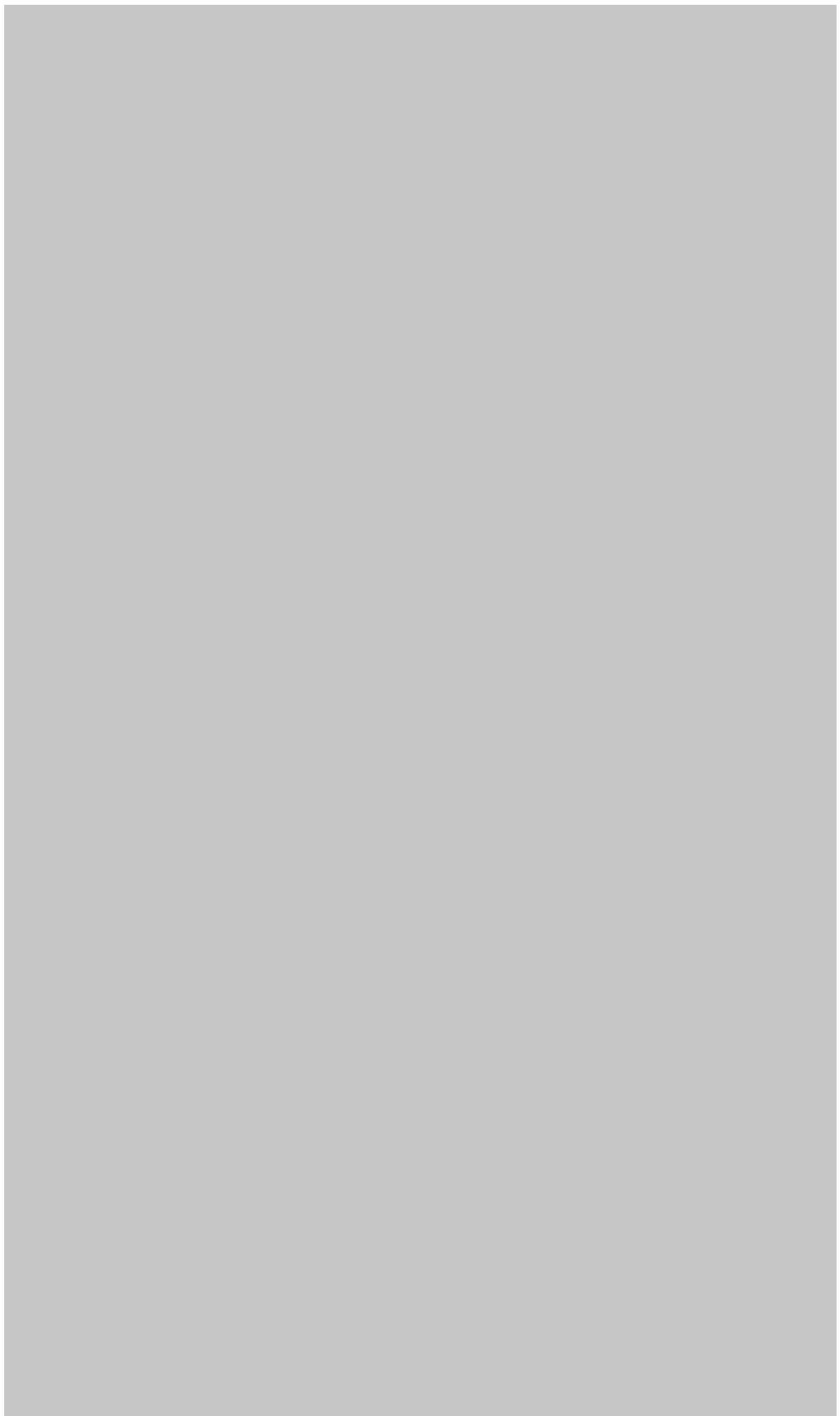
Anyone can have narrow stools every now and again. As long as bowel movements are otherwise normal, this usually isn't cause for concern.<sup>1</sup> There are a number of possible causes of thin stools that do warrant attention, however.

Narrow stools can be caused by constipation, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and the use of certain medications. Less commonly, thin poop can point to something serious such as colorectal cancer.

Contact your healthcare provider if you notice these stools persist for more than a week or two or you experience them more often than not.

This article discusses narrow stool and its potential causes, as well as other signs that you should seek medical attention.





# What Are Narrow Stools?

Narrow stools are long and pencil-thin, rather than the normal rounded shape. They may be harder to pass, requiring you to strain or bear down more than usual.

Depending upon the cause, narrow stool may be accompanied by other symptoms, such as:<sup>1</sup>

- Abdominal pain
- Weight loss
- Bloating
- Blood mixed in or on the stool

[The Meaning of Poop Colors, Shapes, Sizes, and Consistency](#)

## Causes of Narrow Stools

There can be many reasons for thin or narrow stools. Sometimes they happen without any known cause. When they happen frequently, the causes may range from constipation to something more serious like cancer.

### Constipation

Thin stools can signal [constipation](#). When you are "backed up," stool passes slowly through the intestines. This allows the intestines to absorb more water from the stool, making it even more difficult to pass.

If there is significant constipation, only thin amounts of stool may be able to pass through.<sup>1</sup>

Increasing fiber in the diet is important for [treating constipation](#). Staying well-hydrated can also help.

Medications may be necessary for those whose stools don't improve enough through dietary changes or drinking extra water. These medications can include:<sup>1</sup>

- [Laxatives](#), which help stimulate the intestine to pass stool
- [Stool softeners](#), which can make the stool easier to pass by allowing the stool to retain water and fat cells

### Hemorrhoids

[Internal hemorrhoids](#) are swollen and inflamed veins in the rectum or anus that don't extend outside the body. If they are large, they can force stool into a narrow shape as it exits. Internal hemorrhoids may also cause rectal bleeding, which may be present in or on poop.<sup>2</sup>

Hemorrhoid symptoms are often relieved with nonsurgical methods such as:

- **Increasing water intake** to rehydrate hard stool so it can pass with less straining
- **Consuming more fiber** or taking fiber supplements to soften the stool so it can pass more easily
- **Surgery:** This is considered if the hemorrhoid prolapses (extends beyond the anus) or becomes thrombosed (a clot forms in it).<sup>2</sup>

## Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

IBS can cause changes in the size and shape of your stool. It's common for people with IBS to have stool that is smaller or narrower, especially in **constipation-predominant IBS**.

IBS flare-ups can happen during periods of stress, which may cause narrow stools.

If your narrow stools are caused by IBS, you may also have other symptoms like constipation, gas and bloating, and bowel movement-related abdominal pain.

IBS can often be treated with diet and lifestyle changes, such as avoiding trigger foods, eating foods that are high in fiber, and drinking plenty of fluids. In some cases, medication may be required. These could include:

- Fiber supplements or laxatives
- Anticholinergic medications
- Pain medication
- Certain kinds of antidepressants

## Diverticulitis

Diverticulitis is a digestive condition in which inflamed or infected pockets have formed in the large intestine (colon). People with an advanced case could have narrow stools or very small stools that are shaped like pellets.

This happens when the condition causes the lower colon to become distorted, which can change the shape of your stool.<sup>3</sup>

When you have diverticulitis, you may also have:

- Blood in your stool, which causes it to take on a bright or dark red color or become black and tarry
- Foul-smelling stool
- Bouts of diarrhea or constipation
- The need to strain during bowel movements

Mild cases of diverticulitis are usually treated with diet changes and antibiotics. Cases of diverticulitis that are likely to cause narrow stool usually need additional treatment.

Some people with diverticulitis develop an abscess that needs to be drained. In severe cases, surgery to remove part of the intestine may be necessary.

## Fecal Impaction

[Fecal impaction](#) is similar to constipation, but more significant. With an impaction, a lump of dry stool is stuck in the rectum (the bottom portion of the colon just before the anus).

This blocks the ability of other waste to move through normally. Only narrow stool may be able to pass.<sup>4</sup>

Fecal impaction is treated by removing the stuck stool in the rectum. This can be done manually by a healthcare provider. They will use a well-lubricated, gloved hand to insert a finger or two into the rectum to help break up the stool so it can be removed.

Interventions such as suppositories or [enemas](#) may also be used.<sup>5</sup>

## Medications

Medications that slow the movement of the intestines can cause narrow stools. They can lead to constipation and possible fecal impaction, causing thin stool. Some of the medications that can do this include:<sup>1</sup>

- [Opioid](#) pain medications, such as morphine or hydrocodone
- Anticholinergics, such as scopolamine or oxybutynin
- [Antidiarrheal medications](#), if taken too often

## Colorectal Cancer

A cancerous mass in the intestine or closer to the end, near the anus, can cause thin stools. If the mass is large enough to block the stool's movement through the intestine, pencil-thin stool may be the only thing that is able to get by.

Other symptoms associated with [colon cancer](#) include:<sup>6</sup>

- Abdominal pain
- Blood in the stool
- Unintentional weight loss

Treatment for [colorectal cancer](#) can vary, depending on how advanced the cancer has become. Surgery to remove the mass is a common procedure and may be followed by chemotherapy or radiation, or both.<sup>7</sup>

## Anal Cancer

Anal cancer can have many of the same symptoms as colorectal cancer, including narrow stools. This type of cancer begins in the cells around or inside the opening of the anus.

With anal cancer, you may also have:

- Bleeding and/or pain from or around the anus
- [Anal itching](#)
- Changes in bowel habits, such as more or fewer bowel movements
- Straining during bowel movements
- A lump or mass on the anal opening
- Unusual discharge from the anus

Like other cancers, anal cancer may be treated with a combination of radiation and chemotherapy or surgery.

## Are There Tests to Diagnose the Cause of Thin Stools?

A healthcare provider may recommend tests to help determine the cause of thin stools. Tests that may be done to look for the cause of thin stools can include:

- **[Digital rectal examination](#):** A healthcare provider performs this manual exam to see if they can feel a mass inside the rectum.<sup>1</sup>
- **[Stool tests](#):** A sample of stool is sent to a lab and can be analyzed for infections or blood.<sup>8</sup>
- **[Colonoscopy](#):** During this procedure, a camera is inserted into the colon to look for any areas that may be abnormal or causing the symptom of thin stool. If something looks abnormal, a biopsy (sample) can be taken for testing.<sup>6</sup>

## When to See a Healthcare Provider

The occasional episode of thin stool is likely not a cause for concern. However, if thin stools occur more frequently over a period of one or two weeks, notify a healthcare provider.

You should also notify your healthcare provider if your narrow stools aren't responding to what you're doing to improve them (such as increasing fiber) or are accompanied by other symptoms, such as abdominal pain or weight loss. Blood in the stool is always a reason to talk to a healthcare provider.

Addressing the underlying condition early can help prevent complications like complete bowel obstruction or further growth and spread of cancer.

## Summary

Occasional narrow stools are not usually concerning. When narrow stools are happen often or persist longer than a week or two, they may have causes that range from constipation to cancer. See your healthcare provider.

Narrow stools accompanied by other symptoms, such as blood in the stool or abdominal pain, should also be evaluated. Tests can be done to help find the cause.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- What is a normal stool supposed to look like?

Normal stool may be a little different for each person but should be brown in color, soft, and not difficult to pass. It generally stays together when entering the toilet and doesn't contain any blood.

**Learn More** [Blood in Stool](#)

- What does thin stool look like?

Thin stool is stool that is not large in size, but is more ropelike. It can also be described as pencil-thin and long.

**Learn More** [Stool Appearance Changes](#)

- What causes thin stool?

Thin stool can be caused by constipation, fecal impaction, or colorectal cancer. It can also happen occasionally, without any specific cause.

