

FOOD & MOOD

COACHING

THE BOWEL AND THE BRISTOL STOOL CHART

A large part of gut health involves having healthy bowel movements and healthy stools, characterised by the following:








- + Having regular movements (3x per week to 3 x per day)
- + Ease and painless passing stools within a minute of being on the toilet
- + Properly formed stools
- + Complete emptying of bowels when passing

The Bristol stool chart was developed in 1997 by the Bristol Royal Infirmary in the UK to classify stools to check the health status of the bowel and how long the stool has been in the bowel.

For the Food and Mood program, this may only serve as an observational tool for your diet quality and fluid intake.

The chart classifies stool forms into seven categories:

The Bristol Form Scale

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily)
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces. Entirely Liquid

- + **Types 1 and 2** indicates **constipation** which may be hard, difficult to pass and may be darker in colour. It can also indicate slow movement in the bowel. To help alleviate constipation, include fibrous foods like fruits, vegetables and wholegrains, engage in regular physical activity and drink more fluids.
- + **Types 3 and 4** are considered **healthy** and typical forms of stools. **Type 5** stools are soft stools but may suggest diarrhoea and lacking fibre in the diet.
- + **Type 6 and 7** are loose and sometimes liquid in form that suggests **diarrhoea** and **inflammation**. Increase in fluids to prevent dehydration and taking medications will help in treating diarrhoea.

Improving your bowel health

- + **Dietary and lifestyle change.**
A healthy diet is recommended to improve your bowel health. Alcohol, caffeine, spicy and fatty foods should be avoided or lessened as they contribute with the irritation of the gut lining and impair bowel function. Doing regular exercise can also promote good mobility of the bowel to excrete your stools.
- + **Bowel training**
Having a schedule for your bowel movement helps in being regular and training your body to go to the toilet at the same time every day like every morning before or after having breakfast.
- + Coffee has been known to get the bowels moving for many people. Whilst if this happens naturally, there is nothing wrong with it, but using a large glass of water and eating fibre may be a more overall beneficial way to keep things moving.
- + As a reminder, always consult with your medical practitioner or accredited dietitian before undergoing any dietary changes, treatments or change in medications.

