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Bowel Movement

Also called: BM, Feces, Poop, Stool

A bowel movement is the last stop in the movement of food through your digestive tract. Your stool passes out of your body through the rectum and anus. Another name for stool is feces. It is made of what is left after your digestive system (stomach, small intestine, and colon) absorbs nutrients and fluids from what you eat and drink.


Sometimes a bowel movement isn't normal. Diarrhea [<https://medlineplus.gov/diarrhea.html>] happens when stool passes through the large intestine too quickly. Constipation [<https://medlineplus.gov/constipation.html>] occurs when stool passes through the large intestine too slowly. Bowel incontinence [<https://medlineplus.gov/bowel-incontinence.html>] is a problem controlling your bowel movements. Other abnormalities with bowel movements may be a sign of a digestive problem.

NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Start Here

- **Bowel Retraining: Strategies for Establishing Bowel Control** [<https://aboutconstipation.org/treatment/bowel-retraining/>] (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)
- **Elimination Problems or Constipation** [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/elimination-problems/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/problemas-de-eliminacion/?adfree=true>]
- **Normal Function (of the Colon)** [<https://aboutconstipation.org/what-is-constipation/normal-function/>] (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)


Diagnosis and Tests

- **Bacteria Culture Test** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/bacteria-culture-test/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-cultivo-de-bacterias/>]
- **Magnetic Resonance (MR) Defecography** [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/en/info/defecography-mri>] (American College of Radiology; Radiological Society of North America)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.radiologyinfo.org/es/info/defecography-mri>]
- **Stool Color: When to Worry** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diarrhea/expert-answers/stool-color/faq-20058080?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/stool-color/expert-answers/faq-20058080?p=1>]

Treatments and Therapies

- **Biofeedback and Bowel Disorders: Teaching Yourself to Live without the Problem** [<https://aboutconstipation.org/treatment/biofeedback/>] (International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders)

Specifics



- **Bowel Control Problems (Fecal Incontinence)** [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/bowel-control-problems-fecal-incontinence>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/incontinencia-fecal>]

- Frequent Bowel Movements [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/symptoms/frequent-bowel-movements/basics/definition/SYM-20050720?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)

Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/symptoms/frequent-bowel-movements/basics/definition/sym-20050720?p=1>]

Clinical Trials


- ClinicalTrials.gov: Defecation [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Defecation%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Feces [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Feces%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Effect of short-term dietary intervention on fecal serotonin, gut microbiome-derived tryptophanase,... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40488306>]
- Article: Effects of sake lees intake on fecal uremic toxins, plasma D-alanine,... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40460378>]
- Article: Factors associated with response to filgotinib and the prognostic power of... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40379541>]
- Bowel Movement -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Feces%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Defecation%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+AND+%28patient+education+handout%5Bpt%5D+OR+guideline%5Bpt%5D+OR+clinical+trial%5Bpt%5D%29++NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

Find an Expert

- American College of Gastroenterology [<https://gi.org>]
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>] 

Children

- Constipation and Fecal Soiling [https://gikids.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Constipation_and_Fecal_Soiling.pdf] (North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition) - **PDF**
- Elimination Problems or Constipation in Infants and Children [<https://familydoctor.org/symptom/elimination-problems-infants-children/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/sintoma/problemas-de-eliminacion-en-lactantes-y-ninos/?adfree=true>]

Patient Handouts

- Black or tarry stools [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003130.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003130.htm>]
- Daily bowel care program [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000133.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000133.htm>]
- External incontinence devices [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003974.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003974.htm>]
- Fecal culture [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003758.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003758.htm>]
- Fecal smear [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003755.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003755.htm>]
- Stool guaiac test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003393.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003393.htm>]

- **Stools - floating** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003128.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003128.htm>]
- **Stools - foul smelling** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003132.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003132.htm>]
- **Stools - pale or clay-colored** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003129.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003129.htm>]
- **Tenesmus** [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003131.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003131.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Black or tarry stools [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003130.htm>]

Bowel retraining [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003971.htm>]

Daily bowel care program [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000133.htm>]

External incontinence devices [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003974.htm>]

Fecal culture [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003758.htm>]

Fecal smear [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003755.htm>]

Skin care and incontinence [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003976.htm>]

Stool guaiac test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003393.htm>]

Stool ova and parasites exam [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003756.htm>]

Stools - floating [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003128.htm>]

Stools - foul smelling [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003132.htm>]

Stools - pale or clay-colored [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003129.htm>]

Tenesmus [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003131.htm>]

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Diarrhea [<https://medlineplus.gov/diarrhea.html>]

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