

Ok, it's time to get your shit together

Type 3 and 4 are the ideal types. If you want to finally be normal in something then turn over for instructions – there is a lot of information because constipation is a **serious problem** for some people and an irritating problem for many. The information over the page will make you King or Queen of the porcelain throne in no time

Bristol Stool Chart

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)	Ouch, oh fuck oh fuck
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy	Ouch... you have to be fucking kidding me....
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on the surface	Ahhh.... kerplonk
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft	Jeez.... kerplonk
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges	Otherwise known as a splatter job
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool	Lets not go there.... Fluffy???
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces. Entirely Liquid	You have missed four doses and you just realised that the chemist is closed on Saturdays.

The information over the page is a detailed plan for managing your constipation. Please take it seriously, constipation can have long term effects and can damage your bowel. Bear in mind that other medications you take like Lyrica, and Mirtazapine can also cause constipation. How many bowel movements are normal?? that varies but in general we would aim to have no less than 2-3 per week. Any less than that then discuss with me.

There are basically two things you need to focus on to get your shit happening - making it soft and making it move. This is detailed information because it is important. Ask for a copy of this during your appointment.

Opioids partially paralyse the bowel. The time from mouth to toilet bowl is longer, sometimes much much longer. That means that much more water is extracted from the ...ummm... bowel contents and this makes them like bricks (Bristol chart one and two)

So if the bowel is sluggish and slow then the easy fix is to speed up the bowel right? Wrong! That would be like pushing 20mm marbles down a 19mm hose with a stick, it can be done but only just. Soften first, push second otherwise you will get pain, cramps, haemorrhoids or rectal tears as you fire out cannonballs

Softeners ---- The ones in *Italics* are the ones I recommend. Use a mixture of them. **Water is the underlying master ingredient and an intake of 2-3 litres of water per day is essential. Take softeners EVERY DAY, plus a good diet, plus water. You take methadone every day, you have to take these everyday.**

Food fibre - fruit and veg +++ . Bran (it helps to form bulk and this holds more water), oats and grains

Psyllium husks These are **excellent** to use, but you must drink lots of water 3l plus. I don't recommend Metamucil because it is just Psyllium husks with artificial sweeteners. Mix your regular psyllium with cordial if you want. Add a teaspoon or two to a big glass of water and drink FAST. If you let it sit you will see the mass of jelly that it turns into..... that is what we want it to do, but inside your guts.

Ground flax seeds/linseeds. These are dirt cheap and chock full of healthy oils and fibre. Grind them in a coffee/spice grinder and keep them in the fridge. Chuck them over your muesli and it gives it a pleasant nutty flavour or put it in a drink. If you buy it already ground then try and get it from the refrigerator

Ispaghula husk (Fybogel®; Ispagel®), **sterculia** and **frangula** (Normacol) are some other plant based bulking softeners - I'm not convinced that they have any benefits over the plant based fibres that are listed first.

Potato Starch This is not a softener as such, but new science tells us that the resistant starch in this significantly improves the health of the gut bugs way more than any other starch. It will help the bugs that protect your bowel from damage, disease and cancer that can occur because of a slow moving gut. It is cheap and tasteless, one tablespoon in a glass of water once or twice a day. Its pretty tasteless and a great thing you can do for your gut health. In the Asian section of supermarkets (cheaper) or in health shops

Lactulose (chemist) is a synthetic sugar liquid which is not absorbed by the body. When it breaks down it draws fluid into the bowel and makes things soft. Advantages are its pleasant to drink and **very effective**. Its not so cheap but its a great investment in the early stages of fixing things because it works so well

Movicol is an interesting softener in that it doesn't draw fluid into the bowel, it just uses the fluid you drink with it, therefore it doesn't cause dehydration. Otherwise it doesn't have any further benefits over flax seeds

Stimulants OK, now you're soft, its time to get this train moving. Don't use these every day, otherwise the bowel will get dependent on them. A combination of these may be required. Take them the night before and increase your dosage and combination until you're getting 2-3 bowel motions per week.

Exercise is a real winner here. If you move a lot so does your bowel. I wont go into the complex new science behind gut bugs, but you get healthy ones if you exercise. Day time TV is not your friend. Good aerobic type exercise or lots of walking, **or even better a combo of weights and aerobic is best**

Senna - this is an old standard. It comes in many pill forms (e.g. your grannies Ford Pills - Coles and Woollies) or an old favourite, Ballerina Tea. This is available from Asian shops and you chuck in 1-2 teabags in a cup depending and fill it up with boiling water and you've got your dose of senna. Make sure you buy **extra strength** as you may need a lot of these stimulants to overcome the slowing effect of opioids.

Nulax- this is another favourite. Its made from the flesh and skins of concentrated fruits that contain natural sennas - prunes, grapes etc. From the supermarket, you break a piece off and it tastes like a fruit fudge. Make sure no one mistakes it for a pleasant snack to munch on or they will be human jet propulsion

Dulcolax is also very effective. Its a pill available at the chemist and does the job like senna but works differently so it is useful combining them, once the stool is soft.