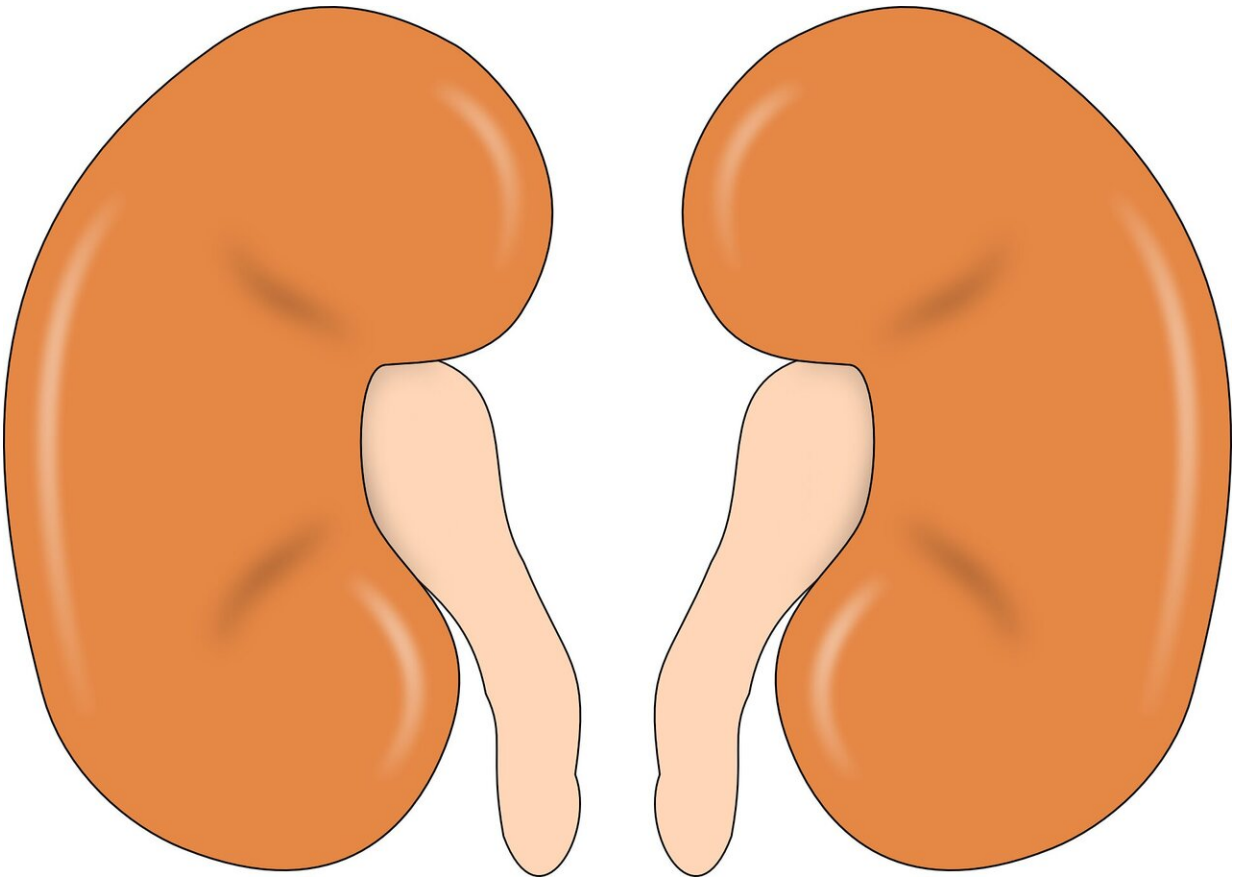


# Consumer Health: Dealing with constipation

April 19 2022

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Nearly everyone deals with constipation at one time or another. About 16 in 100 adults, and 33 in 100 adults over 60, have symptoms of constipation, according to the [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#).

Constipation is having fewer than three bowel movements a week. Chronic constipation is infrequent [bowel movements](#) or difficult passage of stools that persists for several weeks or longer.

While occasional constipation is common, some people experience [chronic constipation](#) that can interfere with their ability to go about their daily tasks. Chronic constipation also may cause people to strain excessively to have a bowel movement.

Treatment for chronic constipation usually begins with diet and [lifestyle changes](#) meant to increase how fast stool moves through your intestines. These recommendations may include increasing your fiber intake, exercising most days of the week, paying attention to the urge to have a bowel movement, and allowing yourself enough time to have a bowel movement without distractions and without feeling rushed.

If those changes don't help, your health care professional may recommend laxatives or other medications; biofeedback training to help you learn to relax and tighten the muscles in your pelvis, which can help you pass stool more easily; or surgery.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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