



Sometimes our bowels aren't as active as we would like them to be, or need them to be. You should be having one healthy bowel movement first thing in the morning along with smaller movements throughout the day. If not, there could be some digestion issues that need to be addressed. From personal experience as well as recommendations from other nutrition professionals, I have combined a list of suggestions that may help you get your bowels moving a little more regularly.

FIBRE INTAKE

A general rule of thumb that I recommend is to intake about 20-30% of your total carb intake as fibre. Carbs are broken down into 3 categories: fibre, sugar and starch. This will always depend on the person as well, as sometimes that isn't always a good option for them and their digestion, but it's a good place to start.

DRINKING ENOUGH WATER

More often than not, when I ask someone how much water they're drinking, they reply with, "not enough." Again, this is going to vary per person, but remember that your body is greatly made up of water, so even though you may not feel thirsty or sweat a lot during exercise, your body needs water just to function properly on a day-to-day basis. When in doubt, I usually recommend to drink more. Some studies suggest you should be drinking about a half to a full ounce of water per body pound (ie. if you're 150lbs, then about 75-150 ounces a day of water), but drinking more than that shouldn't harm you. Drinking excessively (ie. maybe 3x your body weight) may start to have an affect on your kidneys. Be mindful of how you feel when you're trying to increase your water intake.

ALOE JUICE

Something that's helped me over the last few months is consuming aloe juice (not the gel!). Aloe juice is considered a fast and effective natural remedy for gastrointestinal complications; it's like a mild laxative. The aloe fluid is drawn into your stool, making it softer. It only draws a mild amount of fluid into your large intestines, making it a safer natural laxative and less likely to cause dehydration, diarrhea and cramping. The skin of the leaf also helps with protein digestion and helps strengthen your body's intestinal musculature.

How to use: depending on the brand and pureness of the type of aloe juice you use, you may consume anywhere from 50-200mL on a daily basis, as needed. Remember to always follow label guidelines.

COFFEE

Ever heard that coffee makes you poop? Well, it's true! When caffeine enters your system it gets your colonic and intestinal muscles moving, promoting bowel movements. Stools may be a little looser though, as the time in which your colon can absorb liquid from your stool shortens.

How to use: caffeine will work differently per person, but consuming an average cup (8 ounces) should have you feeling stimulated within 20-30 minutes.

CALM

Calm is a natural magnesium supplement with many benefits. Magnesium is a gentle laxative that helps prevent constipation by relaxing the walls of the colon. The role of magnesium is very relevant when you are under stress, have anxiety, or have too many worries. Magnesium attracts water and allows you to bring in more water into your colon. Taking Calm will make your stools softer and allows your colon to absorb water from your stools if your body needs it.

How to use: this supplement will vary per person, but you can start with 1-2g daily and gradually increase, as needed. Add to a few ounces of hot water (slowly, as it fizzes!). You can add Calm to any of your favourite juices if you prefer.

SMOOTH MOVE TEA

The primary active ingredient in Smooth Move tea is senna leaf, which is a safe over-the-counter laxative. Senna stimulates the bowel to alleviate constipation.

How to use: Steep the teabag in a cup of boiling water for 15 minutes. It is best to drink it just before going to bed.

DIGESTIVE ENZYMES

I've taken digestive enzymes before and always keep them in my cupboard, just in case. Digestive enzymes help the body break down starch, fats and proteins to be converted into energy. Your body produces natural digestive enzymes, but having a little extra support once in a while is a good thing. I use digestive enzymes to help break down larger meals (burgers and fries!?) that what commonly consume, allowing my digestion to work optimally, and not causing any back-ups. I get my enzymes from Canadian Protein because they're cheaper than any store brand, and they're in a vegetable capsule, allowing your body to actually absorb the enzymes quickly and efficiently (your body struggles to break down solid pills more often than not).

How to use: Digestive enzymes should be taken right before eating so they can start to work before you even take your first mouth of food. In order to get the full effect of the enzyme, limit your intake of liquids during the meal, as liquids will dilute the enzymes. You can order your enzymes at: <https://www.canadianprotein.com/?s=25138805>

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