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## Is My Poop Normal?

Yes, I'm serious! (And don't you sometimes wonder anyway?)

You already know that your poop can reflect your physical, and sometimes even emotional, health. You may get constipation or have diarrhea when you eat something that "doesn't agree with you," or when you're super-nervous about something. And what about fiber and water? If you're not getting enough, it'll show in your poop. What about the all-important gut microbes? If they're not happy, it'll probably show in your poop.

Did you know there is an "official" standard for poop? I mean a university-created chart! One that is used to help diagnose conditions like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)?

Meet the Bristol Stool Scale. It was created at the prestigious University of Bristol in the UK back in 1997. You can see the chart [here](#).

The scale breaks down type of poop into seven different categories ranging from type 1 which is very constipated, to type 7 which is diarrhea:

- 1 - Separate hard lumps (very constipated).
- 2 - Lumpy and sausage-like (slightly constipated).
- 3 - Sausage shaped with cracks in the surface (normal)
- 4 - Smooth, soft sausage (normal).
- 5 - Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (lacking fiber).
- 6 - Mushy consistency with ragged edges (inflammation).
- 7 - Liquid consistency with no solid pieces (inflammation).

You probably guessed that the shapes described in the Bristol Stool Scale are not the only thing to consider for poop health. Think about how often you go. At least once per day, up to 3 times per day is pretty good. Less than one, or more than three can mean there is something going on. What about how hard you have to try to go? You want it to be as effortless as possible. And the colour? It should be brown from the bile that you need to break down the fats you ingest. And if it's green after a day of massive veggies, or red after that large glass of beet juice, you're just fine. But if you see an abnormal colour, like red or even black, that you can't explain based on what you ate or drank in the last day or two, you probably want to get that checked out.

What do you do when you have "imperfect" poo?

Well, the first thing to consider is how imperfect it is, and how often it is like that? Once in a while, things aren't going to be perfect, and that's A-OK. If you know you need to get more fiber or water, then



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try increasing that. If you haven't had enough probiotic foods, then try getting more of them. If you're super-stressed, then try deep breathing, meditating, or having a warm bath.

Oh, and don't forget the two most basic pieces of nutrition advice:

- First, eat a variety of nutrient-dense, minimally processed foods, including a lot of fruits & veggies (and their "fibrous" skins, wherever possible). The fiber in these is not only helpful for pushing food through your gut, but they also feed those millions of amazing helpful critters that live there (your friendly gut microbes.)
- The second piece of advice is to eat slowly, and mindfully, chewing thoroughly. These are good habits for anyone and everyone, even when you have perfect poop!

Of course, long-term issues might require a more thorough review with a qualified health care practitioner. Don't suffer from poop issues for too long before seeking help.

In my practice I aim to find the root causes for constipation and diarrhea. I will assess your diet, lifestyle, stress response, and test for the presence of candida, parasites, bacteria, viruses, and food sensitivities. If you are interested in learning more about naturopathic care and how it can help, you can request a complimentary 15 minute "meet and greet". To book an appointment with Dr. Jessica, contact our clinic at 905-940- 2727 or email her at [jnesbitt@naturopathicfoundations.ca](mailto:jnesbitt@naturopathicfoundations.ca).



For the past decade, Dr. Nesbitt has been helping women and children with their health concerns. Practicing as a licensed Naturopathic Doctor and Certified Functional Medicine Practitioner, Dr. Jessica uses an integrative approach with a focus in providing personalized care. She aims to find the root cause for fatigue, hormonal imbalances, thyroid/adrenal disorders, stress, weight concerns or digestive issues. She also has a passion for treating children, guiding women through a preconception detox, and supporting a healthy pregnancy. Visit [JessicaND.com](http://JessicaND.com) to learn more!