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Ask the Naturopath: The Ins and Outs of Bowel Movements!

It's one of the most important topics that people just don't talk about. So, let's go there! The first lesson I learned in natural health is that death begins in the colon. Eighty percent of all disease and suffering can be linked in some way to bowel health: allergies, acid reflux, female cramps, mood shifts, headaches, prostate inflammation, joint problems, depression, tumors, growths, and the obvious digestive-related conditions, plus numerous other health complaints from childhood and throughout all phases of life.

We are so "uptight" about our bowels that we hide the fact that they have a function. Food in, waste out; right? It's only natural. Yet, we do a number of silly things to hide the entire experience.

Have you ever:

- Made plenty of noise in a public restroom so that the rest of the attendees wouldn't hear you: cough, rattle the paper dispenser, flush on the go, anything to hide potential noises?
- Done the running water trick, because your date is in earshot of the bathroom?
- Have Vacation Constipation: can't go in an unfamiliar environment, so you hold it for a week!

What would happen if we talked about it more? Might we feel less uncomfortable with this daily necessity? One of the most important misunderstandings is thinking that the bowels are 'normal' when they move only once per day or even once every other day.

This simply is not the case. The intestinal tract is meant to move like a conveyer belt: one meal in, one meal out, three meals in per day, three bowel movements out! If you consume three meals per day and you have one bowel movement per day, in three days, you will have had nine meals and three bowel movements. Where are the other six meals? Sure, some movements may contain more than one meal, yet at this rate, you are steadily falling behind. No wonder the average American has 5 pounds of undigested rotting, fermenting, and putrefying waste in their bowel. No wonder we stink. Do you keep matches, candles, and fragrance sprays in your bathroom? When your bowels are working right, the whole body functions better, and there is rarely any strong odor.

There are three key things that keep the colon healthy:

1. Exercise, both internally from eating fruits and vegetables and externally from walking and other forms of exercise.
2. Friendly Bacteria, also known as acidophilus, serve to protect the colon from bad bacteria, parasites, and infections. It also keeps the movement soft.

3. Water is essential to the colon as it lubricates the bowel and reduces the build-up of waste products. Consider drinking 1/2 the number of your weight in ounces per day. For example, if you weigh 200 pounds, you would drink 100 oz of water per day. It's best to add some fresh lemon, concentrated cherry juice, or even green tea to the water so that your body will absorb it better.

Herbal cleanses are available in many forms; here are a few of my favorites:

- **Generally Sluggish:** One Cascara Sagrada cap and two Psyllium Hulls caps with a tall glass of water morning and night for 21 days. Cascara is the mover, and Psyllium is the scrubber. Adjust more or less of each as needed. Drink plenty of water!
- **Just the Morning Cleanse:** 1 T of liquid Chlorophyll, 1 T of Aloe Vera juice, 2 Slippery Elm capsules, and 1 Food Enzyme cap, and a large glass of water or apple juice. Try this one every morning for 30 days.
- **Soothe & Heal for sore irritable bowels:** 1T of Whole Leaf Aloe Vera juice, 2 caps of Slippery Elm, and 2 capsules of Barley Juice powder. This can be taken one to three times per day according to individual needs until the bowels are no longer sore.
- **Spring Cleanse for Parasites:** 2 caps of Black Walnut and 2 caps of Herbal Pumpkin taken twice daily for 30 days, and let your fishing partner know you've got all the supplies needed. Yes, that was gross but very true! Many people see the worms in their stool.

If you have questions, contact a well-educated herbalist or your local Natural Health Educator.