

Handy Fact Sheet (highlights) Clozapine and constipation

The problem:	Why it is important to you:	How to help yourself:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clozapine can cause bad constipation (bunged up) • Sometimes people don't take this seriously 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can be very painful and sometimes fatal • It can nearly always be avoided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a regular laxative if needed • Note down your bowel movements • If you get constipated then make a fuss and get treatment

What is constipation?






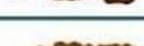

- This is when you want to poo (pass a stool) but can't, or find it hard to poo regularly
- You should poo at least once every 3-4 days.

How will I know if I have constipation?

- Straining to pass a stool
- Stomach aches that get better after a poo
- Feeling sick, less hungry, bloated or full
- Smelly wind
- Stools getting dry, hard, or lumpy
- Watery poo (leaking past a blockage).

The Bristol Stool Chart below gives you a good way of rating your poo. Types 3,4 and 5 are generally OK. Types 1 and 2 definitely mean you have constipation.

Bristol Stool Chart - Developed at University of Bristol

Type.1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type.2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type.3		Like a sausage with cracks on its surface
Type.4		Like a sausage, smooth and soft
Type.5		Soft blobs, clear cut edges (passed easily)
Type.6		Fluffy pieces, ragged edges, mushy stool
Type.7		Watery, no solid pieces. Entirely liquid



Is constipation important?

1. Stools can get solid and stuck, and need an enema or a hand to move them
2. The bowel gets paralysed - this can block the bowel and can even be fatal.

When should I get help?

Get help in the next few days if:

- Your stools are Bristol Type 1, 2, 6 or 7
- You have not passed any stools for more than 3-4 days or if this happens regularly
- Poo leaks out between bowel movements.

Get help in the next day if you have bad tummy pain for over an hour, even more so if you also have:

- **A swollen tummy**
- **The runs (even more so if there is blood in your stools)**
- **Are sick or vomit, even more so if it smells of poo**
- **Have a temperature.**

See your prescriber if you get any of these symptoms, who must take it seriously. Show them this leaflet.

How can I help myself?

- **Fibre:** Eat at least 5 portions a day of fibre, cereal, vegetables or fruit ('roughage')
- **Go when you can:** Go if you have the urge to go, don't wait. Seize the moment!
- **Movement:** Keep active e.g. walking helps keep your gut moving
- **Laxatives:** Take a laxative every day if prescribed
- **Be aware:** Tell a doctor if you have stopped smoking or your bowels have changed
- **Liquid:** Make sure you drink enough liquid - **at least 2L** (about 3½ pints) a day.

Do not to ignore feelings of thirst. Your wee should be lighter yellow. It should **not** be clear (too much liquid) or a darker orange (drink more)

We also have a more detailed version of this fact sheet.

The small print: This leaflet is to help you understand more about constipation from clozapine. See our website for answers to many more questions.
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