Understanding Constipation

Uncomfortable—but treatable with the right approach.

What is Constipation?

Constipation happens when bowel movements become less frequent, difficult to pass, or incomplete. It's more common than most people realize—and affects all age groups.

Signs include:
- Fewer than 3 bowel movements a week
- Straining or pain during bowel movements
- Small amounts of bright red blood on toilet paper or in stool
- Hard, dry, or lumpy stools
- A feeling of incomplete emptying
- Bloating or discomfort

What Causes Constipation?

For some, constipation is occasional. For others, it may be chronic and need medical support.

There's no one single cause, but common triggers include:
- Low fiber intake
- Inadequate fluid consumption
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Changes in routine, travel, or stress
- Medications (like iron supplements, antacids, or some pain medications)
- Delaying the urge to go (due to busy schedules or discomfort)
- Hormonal shifts (common during pregnancy, menstruation, or menopause)

Why Constipation Matters

Untreated constipation can lead to:
- Abdominal pain and bloating
- Hemorrhoids or anal fissures
- Nausea or reduced appetite
- Fatigue and irritability
- Impaction (when stool becomes stuck and harder to pass)

What Can Help?

Fiber First
- Aim for 25–35g of fiber daily for adults
- Include: fruits (especially prunes, apples, pears), vegetables, oats, whole grains, legumes, seeds

Hydration
- Water is essential for softening stool
- Limit dehydrating drinks (caffeine, alcohol)

Move Your Body
- Exercise stimulates bowel function—try walking, yoga, or stretching daily

Don't Ignore the Urge
- Responding to your body's signals prevents stool from hardening in the colon

Establish a Routine
- Try going at the same time each day (e.g., after breakfast)
- Create a relaxed, unhurried bathroom environment

Over-the-Counter Relief (if needed)
- Stool softeners or gentle laxatives may help for short-term relief
- Always consult a healthcare provider if you rely on them frequently

When to see a Doctor

Seek medical advice if you experience:
- Constipation lasting more than 2 weeks
- Blood in stool
- Unintentional weight loss
- Severe pain or vomiting
- Feeling like you can't empty your bowels completely

A Note from Dr. Baweja

Constipation may be common, but it doesn't need to be your normal. With small changes in diet, movement, and habits, relief is possible—and lasting.

If you've been struggling, let's talk. You're not alone, and support is here.