

Constipation can be Overcome

By A. E. Hopkins.

CONSTIPATION IS ONE OF THE CURSES of the civilised world today, but with a little thought and the application of a few simple rules it can be definitely relieved and in very many cases completely eradicated.

Relief from this distressing condition brings great rewards in the shape of clear bright eyes, clean complexion, clean tongue, more energy and a brighter outlook on life in general.

On the other side of the picture the sufferers from this complaint usually possess lifeless, muddy complexions, dull, uninteresting eyes, furred-up tongues, irritable tempers and indolent dispositions.

There is no doubt that this unnatural condition forms the basis for many complaints such as indigestion in its various distressing forms, catarrh of the digestive tract, foul breath, and even more serious diseases.

In the first place it is essential that the desire to empty the bowels should always be obeyed. Never wait until the time is more convenient. Remember that with every delay the inclination becomes less and less, until there is never the feeling in this direction at all. When this stage is reached a definite habit must be cultivated. A visit to the appropriate place of retirement must be arranged each and every day. With most people immediately after breakfast is a suitable time. At first the visits will not be successful, but persistence will be rewarded by regular easy evacuation.

Natives of so-called uncivilised races evacuate after each full meal and constipation is rare amongst these people.

The secret of success in this habit is absolute regularity and always give the bowels sufficient time. Do not rush things. Whilst on these visits, massage the lower abdomen, alternating with contraction of the abdominal muscles, but do not strain. Simple direct perseverance, with concentration, will often be all that is necessary in mild cases of obstinacy.

The design of the pedestal is often at fault. The ideal arrangement is for the seat to slope slightly backwards, so that the knees are brought closer to the abdomen. This is the natural position and if the pedestal is too high for children or short-legged people, a footrest should be provided.

Daily exercise of the abdominal muscles in a mild way considerably helps, for by this means the whole of the abdominal corset is kept in tone and it responds to mental stimulation without undue effort. Do not lose any opportunity to bend or twist the body. Our occupations, as a rule, do not give sufficient all-round movement to the lower trunk with consequent muscle slackness in this important area. An occasional stretch during the day allows any congestion to disperse or "move on" as it were.

Diet is of the greatest importance, and the natural, unspiced foods are the best.

Fruits, fresh leafy vegetables with dairy products, nuts, whole wheat breads and cereals, provide the body with all the necessary ingredients and vitamins to maintain health.

With natural foods there remains, after the digestive processes have extracted all that the body requires to maintain life, a residue which is bulky. This bulk the bowels need, for its presence stimulates the muscular

structure of the larger bowel, and from this stimulation is obtained the "warning" which should be obeyed as soon as possible. The foregoing is the natural way of things but where neglect or wrong food combinations have created the condition commonly known as constipation, or technically "intestinal stasis," an elaboration of our food intake has to be arranged.

The cellulose content, roughage or bulk necessary to stimulate movement in the bowels is obtained principally from the vegetable family and whole grains or cereals.

When the bowel movement is sluggish an increase in the consumption of vegetables of the leafy variety is indicated. These consist of lettuce, spinach, cabbage and celery, but do not cook them in lots of water as is the common practice, but use only sufficient water in the bottom of the cooking utensil to create a steam atmosphere, allowing the contents to "stew in their own juice," to use a common expression.

Other vegetables such as onions, carrots, parsnips, swedes and turnips should be used as a change, but pin your faith to the brassicas or leafy growths.

Fruits are very helpful and should be eaten whenever possible. Apart from the roughage they provide, they possess acid properties which stimulate the bowels into action. Apples, pears, oranges, lemons, grapes, grape-fruit and peaches are the best acid fruits to consume, whilst prunes, figs, dates and raisins also help in a lesser way.

Nuts, if they can be easily digested are very effective.

Whilst restoring the normal bowel functions by the foregoing dietary method, only a small amount of meat should be used. Meat is generally stimulating but not in the way required. It causes fermentation, and stagnation of the digestion and eliminatory processes which are already sluggish. Fish can be taken but should not be fried on any account.

Drink plenty of fluids such as water, diluted fruit juices and weak tea, but coffee should be avoided for a time. Water is of course the best of all as it cleans the internal tract and helps to move on the waste products.

If the foregoing, after a reasonable time is not effective in securing normal bowel action, further action must be taken, but not with purgatives. The frequent use of these weaken the muscles of the tract, irritate the mucous lining, and upset the nervous system. In action they are severe and completely empty all the bowels. This leaves the pipes empty and obviously there is nothing left for the muscles to work on. Purges leave the condition worse than before their use. They also often produce griping pains and violent movements of the bowels, which are contrary to nature.

Salts of various kinds are often used as a habit, but a habit they remain, and the bowels never, therefore, have a chance of regaining their normality.

Purging habits of all kinds should be dropped immediately. Give the bowels a rest for a day or two and, then start introducing the roughage method described above. Occasionally take a tablespoonful of medicinal liquid paraffin. This is harmless, tasteless and efficiently lubricates the pipes, thus allowing easier movement of the waste matter through the intestines without any pain, griping or violent action.

If the case is still difficult senna pods used wisely are a great help. They are a natural product and the quantity can be adjusted to suit every individual need. Place a few of these pods in a glassful of cold water, soak them

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)