



The use of Golden Linseed (Flax seeds) for Constipation

Information for patients

The aim of this leaflet is to give you advice on how to prevent constipation using Golden Linseeds.

What is constipation?

The number of bowel movements we pass can be different for everyone and it is normal to be anything from three times a day to three times a week.

Constipation is when your bowel motions are infrequent, hard and difficult to pass. You may feel uncomfortable, bloated or feel a sensation of fullness in the back passage. Straining can lead to haemorrhoids (piles) which may appear at the back passage and bleed. Women may find intercourse painful if the bowel is very full.

What are Golden Linseeds or Flax seeds?

- They are a food source and are high in dietary fibre.
- They can be purchased as seeds or ground as a powder. They can be obtained from supermarkets and health food shops.
- They help constipation by softening and lubricating the bowel motion.
- They are a gentle and natural and an effective laxative.
- Do not use the dark brown seeds as they are less refined and will not work in the same positive way.

How to take them

The seeds or powder can be sprinkled over food such as breakfast cereal or added to cooking. Most people use it sprinkled over cereal in the morning, in yoghurt, soup or even sandwiches.

1. Take 10g – 15g of seeds with 150 ml of water, milk, fruit juice or similar liquid 2 – 3 times per day.

2. Linseeds should be taken at least 30 minutes to one hour before or after taking other medicine.
3. Do not take linseeds immediately prior to bed time.
4. Linseeds can act within 12 – 24 hours but may take 2 – 3 days to reach the maximum effect.
5. It is common to see Linseeds in the stool – this is normal.

It is important to drink around 2 litres of fluid in a day as too little fluid can cause constipation and Linseeds need fluid to make them work properly.

Cautions

- Linseeds should not be used in children under 12 years old.
- It is recommended that pregnant or breast feeding women avoid the use of Linseeds.
- Linseeds may naturally increase oestrogen hormone levels so are not recommended in women with current or previous hormone based cancers.
- If you have any gastrointestinal (gut or bowel) condition, please discuss the use of Linseeds with your clinician or doctor.

Developed by Tayside Continence Group and has been reviewed by staff and patients

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This leaflet can be made available in other languages and formats on request by telephoning
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