

About Regularity

Regularity is defined as the comfortable passage (without straining) of well formed stools (*neither too hard, nor too soft*) occurring at least once every two to three days without the use of laxatives, assistive devices or other interventions. One movement of well formed stool a day may be considered the optimum.

A well formed stool is soft and flexible. It has good volume and weight, measuring about one and a half inches in diameter and about four to seven inches in length. Well formed stools make a clean exit from the body and hold their shape. Color varies from light to dark brown and may appear slightly green with the digestion of some foods. Particles of insoluble fiber (such as corn) are sometimes apparent.

Dietary fiber, fluids, muscular activity, healthy intestinal bacteria, a healthy colon lining and speedy stool transit time are important components of regularity. These elements work in concert to produce well formed stools. A prompt response to the defecation reflex ensures this outcome.

Just prior to elimination, muscular activity in the colon pushes feces down into the flexible rectal sack which expands to accommodate the stools. Nerve endings, stimulated by the expansion, activate the defecation reflex indicating to the body that it is time to move the bowel. However, if stools are with held, they remain in the expanded sack becoming dried out and hard keeping the rectal sack expanded—stretched out. Over time, if stools are repeatedly with held, the rectal sack can loose its ability to spring back to normal size and loose the sensitivity to activate the defecation reflex. The result is an enlarged rectal sack which can lead to problems with chronic constipation. Long term neglect of the defecation reflex can cause it to fail to function. This can lead to impaction.

To maintain the responsiveness of the defecation reflex, and to maintain the shape of the rectal sack, it is important to move the bowels as soon as possible once the reflex has been activated, *and*, to avoid with holding stools. The reflex is activated whenever stools are made ready by the body for elimination. It is most commonly stimulated about thirty to forty-five minutes after eating. This is due to activity that is generated in the gastrointestinal tract when food enters the stomach. It also commonly occurs about thirty minutes after rising from bed in the morning, or after a few minutes of light exercise such as walking.

Because individual bowel function is unique, the frequency of moving the bowels varies from individual to individual. Some individuals will move their bowels every day, even several times a day, while others will move their bowels once every two to three days. This is normal.

Frequency of moving the bowels can change over time. There are a number of factors that can affect the frequency of bowel movements *and* influence stool formation:

- ◆ **Diet:** Low dietary fiber intake, intake of highly refined, instant or “fast” foods, a diet high in animal products such as meat, cheese, and eggs.
- ◆ **Fluids:** Inadequate fluid intake, use of diuretic medications, dehydration.
- ◆ **Activity:** Lack of daily exercise, prolonged bed rest, or confinement to bed during recovery.
- ◆ **Stool Withholding:** With holding stools by ignoring the defecation reflex.
- ◆ **Medications:** Some prescription Medications, some over the counter medications and some health supplements.
- ◆ **Lifestyle and Life Choices:** Pregnancy, stress, emotional upset, anxiety, fear, nervousness, travel, smoking, & alcohol.
- ◆ **Disease & Illness:** In addition to diseases of the gastro intestinal tract, the presence of, or treatment for, many other chronic illnesses can affect the G.I. Tract.
- ◆ **Aging:** Many organs, including the G.I. tract, slow down due to the aging process.

Loosely formed stools, watery stools (diarrhea), pencil thin stools, pellet like stools, sandy stools, dense-putty-like stools, dry or hard stools (constipation), an inability to move the bowel with out bowel interventions (such as a laxative, enema, suppository, or digital stimulation) are some indicators that stools are not being properly formed.

Fruit-Eze™ pure fruit regularity blend can help you to achieve and maintain regularity, avoid constipation, and constipation leading to impaction.

Fruit-Eze™ fruit blend does not interfere with medications and, unlike laxatives, it does not require additional fluid intake. Because it is portable, it is convenient to take with you wherever you go.

*Article by Carole Engel, Director of Outreach,
Fruit-Eze, Inc. © 2003
Reviewed by Dr. David Taylor, G.I.*

Fruit-Eze, Inc. P.O. Box 91275 Portland, OR 97291

1-888-Regular / 1-888-734-8527 / (503) 297-4126 / Fax: (503) 297-5638

www.fruiteze.com / info@fruiteze.com