



When the Going Gets Tough

A [recent study](#) found that almost half of people with MS experience constipation and almost one third have fecal incontinence.



MS can disrupt bowel function in a number of ways. The movement of stool through the colon can be affected by nerve damage, weakened or spastic abdominal muscles, or common MS symptoms like depression or decreased physical activity.

Not all bowel dysfunction is caused by MS, it can be due to other health conditions. Diarrhea can stem from food sensitivities, consuming contaminated food/water or an infection. A number of medications, or even just voluntarily delaying a bowel movement can cause constipation.



Here are some suggestions that may help!

Lifestyle Changes



Keep a diary of bowel patterns. Set a regular time for bathroom trips.



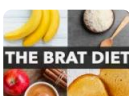
For constipation, eat plenty of fiber to stay regular.



Stay well hydrated. A hot beverage may help move things along.



Avoid unnecessary stress. Emotions can affect bowel function.



For diarrhea, bland foods are easy to digest and help firm up stool.



When out and about, use [protection](#) and wear easily removable clothes.

Treatments



[Medications](#) are available to address constipation and diarrhea.



[Suppositories](#) are an option to treat constipation if oral laxatives fail.



An [enema](#) can be used to clear hardened stool.



[Pelvic floor exercises](#) can help reduce the chances of bowel accidents.



[Nerve stimulation](#) is an effective treatment for fecal incontinence.



[Collagen injections](#) can improve control and prevent soiling.