How Constipation Becomes Dangerous

After nutrients are absorbed from the food we eat, undigested material and waste products form fecal waste, which is temporarily stored in the colon. When a person is constipated, the fecal waste is not expelled normally; it accumulates. Constipation can be caused by several factors. The most common are dehydration, insufficient intake of dietary fiber, and stress. Occasional constipation does not usually pose a danger to your health. However, being constipated often, or suffering from what medical practitioners call chronic constipation can lead to serious health issues.

Increase in Blood Pressure and Heart Attack

A high blood pressure reading indicates that the blood is exerting a higher than normal pressure against the blood vessels. This increased pressure can damage the walls of blood vessels, making them more susceptible to cholesterol buildup. When cholesterol builds up, plaques and blood clots may form, leading to blockages within the vessels. When blood flow to the heart is compromised, lack of oxygen supply can result in a heart attack.

There is no scientifically proven causative relationship between constipation and hypertension. However, blood pressure can increase when a person is straining to defecate, especially when the person is constipated. The association between hypertension and constipation, especially in a person with serious heart disease, can be attributed to the excessive or frequent straining, which increases the risk of heart attack. A high salt and fatty diet are some of the known

causes of both hypertension and constipation.

Formation of Hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoids are large purple masses that form in the anal canal as a result of rectal vein dilation and rupturing. They can be classified as external or internal based on their location. External hemorrhoids are found outside the anal canal as grape-like protuberances covered with a layer of mucus. Internal hemorrhoids are found inside the anal canal.

When a person is often constipated, hemorrhoids can develop due to straining. As the person forcefully tries to defecate, the rectal veins begin to dilate and may rupture and bleed. Inflammation usually develops into hemorrhoids, which can be itchy and painful.

Fecal Impaction and Colon Toxicity

The colon is responsible for the last phase of digestion, which includes the reabsorption of most of the remaining fluid in the fecal waste. With constipation, fecal waste may become impacted in the *rectum* as well as the terminal or end portion of the colon, the *sigmoid*. As fecal waste remains in the rectum and sigmoid, more fluid is absorbed causing the fecal matter to harden and making it more difficult to pass. This is referred as *fecal impaction*. The condition can cause irritation to the lining of the colon and can also lead to infection.

Fecal waste contains bacteria and waste materials from the digestive process. Constant accumulation can cause a distention and possible rupture of the colon, which is very dangerous. Infection of the colon may result in further swelling and inflammation known as *toxic megacolon* while rupture will release the waste materials and digestive bacteria into other areas of the abdomen, which is

life-threatening.

Rectal Prolapse and Anal Fissures

Rectal prolapse, or the protrusion of loose rectal tissue to a point where it is seen externally outside the anus, can be a consequence of chronic constipation. It usually appears as a proboscis-like protrusion passing the anal sphincter muscles.During defecation, fecal waste is normally pushed out of the rectum and out of the anus. With constipation, fecal waste hardens which makes it relatively difficult for the stool to pass through. When constipation becomes chronic and constant straining is common, the rectum may eventually slip off from its normal position and protrude out of the anus. Oftentimes, the protrusion is temporary and goes back to normal after the bowel movement. However, in some cases, the protrusion can become permanent and may display mucosal discharge. Though not life-threatening, the condition can be embarrassing.

Anal fissures or tears in the lining of the anal canal can also be caused by excessive straining due to constipation. Normally, when a bowel movement takes place, fecal waste easily passes through as the anal sphincter muscles relax. This is because the stool is relatively soft from retaining some amount of fluid even after digestion. But as fecal waste accumulates in the sigmoid and rectum during constipation, where water is continuously reabsorbed, hardening the stool, it becomes relatively difficult for the stool to pass through. Straining to forcefully defecate can also result in tearing of the anal canal, which leads to bleeding and painful bowel movement.

Conclusion

Proper diet will certainly be important. A high fiber diet full of fresh vegetables, fruits, and whole grains promotes

movement in your digestive system and increases stool bulk. Knowing how constipation can be much more dangerous in individuals who are hypertensive, it should be prevented as much as possible. You can search for high-fiber DASH diet recipes here. And of course, regular exercise and drinking at least 1 ½ quarts of water daily should also be upheld.

Related Reading:

- *Natural Remedies for Constipation – With Recipes*
- *Gluten, Candida, Leaky Gut Syndrome, and Autoimmune Diseases*
- *Autism, Gut Health, Obesity, the MMR Vaccine, and Andrew Wakefield*
- *Detox Cheap and Easy Without Fasting – Recipes Included*

Sources:

- *10 Causes of Blood in Stool* – Thrombocyte.com
- *Can Constipation Cause Heart Attacks* – ACLSCertification.com