

Your Monthly Update

Dear Colleague

Welcome to the November 2008 newsletter from Pure Bio Ltd.

Did you know:

Researchers have discovered new evidence suggesting that green tea may help treat skin disorders such as psoriasis and dandruff. Scientists from the Medical College of Georgia studied the effects of green tea on inflammatory skin diseases in an animal model. Their research suggested that green tea suppresses inflammation by slowing the growth of skin cells, by regulating the expression of caspase-14 - a protein in genes that regulates the life cycle of a skin cell.

In response to a specific request, the chosen topic for this month is:

Constipation

Protocol Summary

Ranking	Nutritional Supplements	Botanical Medicine
Primary	Fibre Glucomannan	Aloe Cascara Flaxseed Psyllium Senna
Secondary		Alder Buckthorn Basil Buckthorn Rhubarb
Other	Chlorophyll Flaxseed oil	Bladderwrack Dandelion Fenugreek Fo-ti

Primary – Reliable and relatively consistent scientific data showing a substantial health benefit.

Secondary – Contradictory, insufficient, or preliminary studies suggesting a health benefit or minimal health benefit.

Other – An herb is primarily supported by traditional use, or the herb or supplement has little scientific support and/or minimal health benefit.

Symptoms

Constipation is one of the most common presenting ailments and is characterized by a difficulty passing stools or an absence of the urge to eliminate. Stools, when passed, tend to be hard, knotted and dark. Other symptoms that accompany constipation include bloating, appetite loss and mild nausea or indigestion. Repeated straining to defaecate eventually leads to haemorrhoids. Chronic constipation has constitutional implications because toxins are formed and absorbed when waste remains in the intestines for excessive periods. Headaches, bad breath and skin problems can result and increase the susceptibility for intestinal cancer. Waste should be eliminated through the bowels on a regular basis, usually once or more per day. If constipation is experienced along with other abnormalities, including blood in the stool, weight loss or pain, a medical practitioner should be consulted for further diagnostic evaluation.

Causes

- Constipation occurs when waste passes through the intestines too slowly. A healthy colon eliminates waste in 6-18 hours. The underlying cause is often as simple as a low-fibre, high-sugar diet, which causes sluggish peristaltic muscles. Even where sugar is not added, refined flour, rice and pasta have been stripped of their fibre and nutrients. Raw foods provide necessary fibre as well as nutrients. The consumption of cow's milk is the most common cause of hard, dry stools, especially in children. High stress levels also contribute to constipation. In addition, many people experiencing constipation do not drink enough liquids especially water, necessary for waste movement.
- *Laxatives compound the problem because the constant stimulation of the bowels interferes with the body's natural functions. An imbalance of intestinal flora in the bowels is also a contributing factor.*
- Magnesium deficiency will also lead to constipation. Magnesium is the central element of chlorophyll and is found in all greens.
- *Likewise, a deficiency of folic acid may lead to chronic constipation. Folic acid is also abundant in green leafy vegetables.*
- Lack of physical activity also plays a role. Physical fitness optimises circulation to the bowel as well as other vital organs.
- *A number of medications cause constipation, including iron pills, antacids, diuretics, painkillers and antidepressants. Many pregnant women must combat constipation, which can be aggravated by iron supplements.*
- Short-term bouts of constipation are particularly common among tourists, who change their eating habits and routines when visiting a foreign place.
- *Other factors to consider are underactivity of the thyroid gland, which slows the metabolic rate, and liver problems that restrict bile needed for proper digestion.*
- One of the most frequently overlooked causes of chronic constipation is parasites. In the U.S., it is estimated that about 50% of the water supplied to communities is contaminated with the parasite *Giardia lamblia*. This parasite and several others (esp. *Blastocystis hominus* and *Entamoeba histolytica*) have been implicated in a large number of physical and emotional illnesses. People can easily pick these infestations up from salad bars, communal / community centres and household pets.

Dietary Modification

Fibre, particularly insoluble fibre, is linked with prevention of chronic constipation. Insoluble fibre from food acts like a sponge, pulling water into the stool and making it easier to pass. Insoluble fibre comes mostly from vegetables, beans, brown rice, whole wheat, rye, and other whole grains. Switching from white bread and white rice to whole wheat bread and brown rice often helps relieve constipation. It is important to drink lots of fluid along with the fibre—at least 450ml per serving of fibre. Otherwise, the fibre may actually worsen the constipation.

In addition, wheat bran may be added to the diet. Recommended dosage is 60g or more per day of wheat bran along with fluid. An easy way to add wheat bran to the diet is to

put it in breakfast cereal or switch to high-bran cereals. Wheat bran often reduces constipation, although not all research shows it to be successful. Higher amounts of wheat bran are sometimes more successful than lower amounts.

A double-blind trial found that chronic constipation among infants and problems associated with it were triggered by intolerance to cows' milk in two-thirds of the infants studied. Symptoms disappeared in most infants when cows' milk was removed from their diet. These results were confirmed in two subsequent, preliminary trials. Constipation triggered by other food allergies might be responsible for chronic constipation in some adults. If other approaches do not help, these possibilities may be discussed with a physician.

Intake of fibre can also be increased in the form of fresh fruits and vegetables. The daily diet should include 800g of fresh, raw vegetables, 200g of fruit and one bowl of wholegrain cereal. Drink at least eight cups of water and fruit or vegetable juices daily.

Certain fruits and vegetables are excellent mild, natural laxatives.

- A glass of hot water with a little lemon taken first thing in the morning helps promote normal bowel function.
- *Sauerkraut contains choline, which activates peristaltic movements.*
- Artichokes relieve constipation due to a sluggish liver by stimulating bile production. Foods rich in magnesium such as dark green, leafy vegetables and figs draw water into the stools, increasing their volume and softness.
- *Papayas have a stimulating effect on the bowels and are mild enough to be fed to infants.*
- Prunes are a time-tested effective remedy. Soak five to ten prunes overnight and take in the morning with the soaking water. Even more effective is a mousse made from two-thirds prunes and one-third figs: press the soaked fruits through a sieve and take a teaspoon every half hour, or combine one-half cup prune juice with one tablespoon lemon juice and one cup of spring water and drink before bedtime for overnight relief of constipation.
- *Ripe gooseberries have a cleansing and laxative effect on the bowels because of their high cellulose and mucilage content.*
- Sorrel, added to a green salad, stimulates intestinal activity.
- *Chronic constipation can often be alleviated simply and naturally by eating a cucumber salad dressed with lemon, onion and unrefined, cold-pressed flax seed oil. Flax seeds are an excellent source of mucilaginous fibre. They absorb up to eight times their weight in water, thereby softening stools and making them easier to pass.*

Lifestyle Modification

Regular exercise like walking, swimming or cycling increases the muscular contractions of the intestine, promoting elimination. Walking is the best bowel regulator. When walking, the calf muscles, which are indirectly related to the digestive tract, are activated.

Diaphragm exercises are excellent to stimulate peristalsis.

Ensuring a routine that allows defaecation whenever the urge is felt is important. The digestive tract is at its peak performance during the early morning hours between 5am and 7am. Suppressing the urge to eliminate the bowels is a large cause of chronic constipation. It is preferable to empty the bowels before work, enabling a clearer mind due to elimination of toxins.

Nutritional Supplement Treatment Options

Glucomannan is a water-soluble dietary fibre that is derived from konjac root. Like other sources of fibre, such as psyllium and fenugreek, glucomannan is considered a bulk-forming laxative. A preliminary trial and several double-blind trials have found

glucomannan to be an effective treatment for constipation. The amount of glucomannan shown to be effective as a laxative is 3 to 4 grams per day. In constipated people, glucomannan and other bulk-forming laxatives generally help produce a bowel movement within 12 to 24 hours.

[Chlorophyll](#), the substance responsible for the green colour in plants, may be useful for a number of gastrointestinal problems. In a preliminary trial, chlorophyll supplementation eased chronic constipation in elderly people.

Botanical Treatment Options

The laxatives most frequently used world-wide come from plants. Herbal laxatives are either bulk-forming or stimulating.

When taking herbs for laxative purposes, nutrition and lifestyle have to be addressed to heal and correct the causes of this condition. Take the herbs that stimulate the peristalsis of the intestines, speed the removal of hardened faecal matter through the intestinal tract, strengthen the connective tissue and heal inflamed mucous membranes so that the intestines are able to function naturally on their own. ***Avoid herbal laxatives during pregnancy or nursing because of their abortive properties and the possibility of causing the nursing baby diarrhoea.*** Psyllium seeds are safe to take during pregnancy.

[Psyllium, flaxseed, and fenugreek](#) - Bulk-forming laxatives come from plants with a high fibre and mucilage content that expand when they come in contact with water; examples include psyllium, flaxseed, and fenugreek. As the volume in the bowel increases, a reflex muscular contraction occurs, stimulating a bowel movement. These mild laxatives are best suited for long-term use in people with constipation.

- [Nutra-Flax PE](#)

Recommended dosage is 7.5 grams of psyllium seeds or 5 grams of psyllium husks, mixed with water or juice, one to two times per day. Some practitioners use a combination of senna (18%) and psyllium (82%) for the treatment of chronic constipation. This has been shown to work effectively for people in nursing homes with chronic constipation. (Psyllium forms a soft, gelatinous substance which removes faecal waste and sometimes causes minor bleeding – patients should be warned of this potential side-effect).

[Basil \(Ocimum basilicum\)](#) seed has been found to relieve constipation by acting as a bulk-forming laxative in one preliminary study. A similar study showed the seeds to be useful following major surgery for elderly people with constipation. Alginate acid, one of the major constituents in [bladderwrack \(Fucus vesiculosus\)](#), is a type of dietary fibre that may be used to relieve constipation.

Stimulant laxatives are high in [anthraquinone glycosides](#), which stimulate bowel muscle contraction. The most frequently used stimulant laxatives are senna leaves, cascara bark, and aloe latex. While senna is the most popular, cascara has a somewhat milder action. Cascara sagrada increases peristaltic action of the colon.

[Aloe juice](#) is very potent and should be used with caution. Aloe vera juice heals and aids in colon functioning. Recommended dosage is 115ml daily for at least six months. After improvement, take 1 tbsp. daily for maintenance.

Other stimulant laxatives include [buckthorn](#), [alder buckthorn \(Rhamnus frangula\)](#), and [rhubarb \(Rheum officinale, R. palmatum\)](#).

[Castor oil](#) is a potent laxative and should be used for extreme cases only and not over a long-term period. Take 1 tbsp. in the evening before retiring.

[Slippery elm](#) helps to heal the lower intestinal tract.

[Camomile](#) or [comfrey root enemas](#) help remove bacterial toxins when other remedies are unsuccessful. Add 10-20 drops of [echinacea](#) tincture to enema water to fight bacteria.

[Goldenseal](#) is a natural antibiotic and will help stop bleeding. Take 1/2 tsp. of tincture three times a day for not more than two days during acute flare-ups.

[Licorice tea](#) soothes intestinal walls and is especially indicated for chronic constipation.

Constipation Homeopathy

Many homeopathic remedies exist for constipation that can be used in the short-term to stimulate the body's vital force. As homeopathy is specific to each person, this list should only be considered as a sample of an individual's possible needs. Take 6c every two hours for up to 10 doses.

[Nux vomica](#) is the remedy for frequent but ineffectual urge to pass stool, producing a little at a time; chronic use of laxatives. Feeling irritated and sensitive to noise, touch and pressure. Also used when constipation alternates with diarrhoea.

[Alumina](#) is used for constipation with soft, clay-like and mucous-covered stools that are difficult to pass, often caused by sluggish bowels due to low-fibre diet. No urge to use the bowels.

[Sulphur](#) is recommended for a hard and dry stool that is passed with difficulty and burning sensation. Alternates with diarrhoea; stools are passed every two to four days when constipated.

Integrative Options

Anecdotal reports have claimed that acupuncture is beneficial in the treatment of constipation. Placebo-controlled trials of longer duration are needed to determine whether acupuncture is a useful treatment for constipation.

Biofeedback techniques have been shown to significantly increase the frequency of bowel movements among women with chronic constipation.

For further information, contact:

Tracy S Gates

Director, PURE BIO LTD.

01403 730342

info@purebio.co.uk