

What Your Bowel Movements May Be Telling You™

Your usual pattern can offer useful clues about digestion, hydration, fiber and how quickly food is moving through your system.

Notice what is typical for you and pay attention to changes that persist.

1 Hard or Lumpy

May appear as separate hard pieces or a firm, cracked stool.

Consider: fluids, gradual fiber, movement and bathroom routine.



2 Smooth and Formed

Soft, formed and comfortable to pass is often a well-tolerated pattern.

Notice: comfort and consistency matter more than perfection.



3 Soft or Mushy

Loose pieces or a fluffy, poorly formed stool may move through more quickly.

Consider: recent foods, stress, medications or a sudden fiber change.



4 Watery or Urgent

Frequent watery stools can increase fluid and electrolyte losses.

Consider: hydration and whether symptoms need medical guidance.



Look Beyond Shape



Frequency:

Your regular pattern may range from several times a day to several times a week.



Comfort:

Straining, pain, urgency or incomplete emptying are worth noticing.



Color:

Foods, supplements and medications can affect stool color.



Pattern:

A lasting change matters more than one unusual bowel movement.



Martine's Midlife Wellness Tip

Your normal may not look exactly like someone else's. Track changes alongside meals, stress, sleep and medications.



Contact Your Healthcare Provider

Seek guidance for blood or black stools, pale or clay-colored stools, severe pain, fever, dehydration, unexplained weight loss or a new change that persists.

