Healing
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Constipation, Source of Toxins

Chronic constipation is not an infrequent complaint. It is a very trying and tension-producing symptom-complex. On one hand, the person knows that regular evacuations are necessary to keep the digestive system functioning satisfactorily. On the other hand, the system seems to shut down. Then, attempts at evacuation can be painful, difficult, and frustrating-resulting in secondary bloating, abdominal pain, feelings of drowsiness, foul flatus and other symptoms that do not seem to be directly related.

This is in most cases due to unbalanced or disturbed vata dosha. It occurs most frequently in older persons (vata phase of life) who do not exercise very often and have changed their dietary habits. So, in order to treat this problem, often a complete change in lifestyle is necessary, including diet, exercise and how we think about the problem.

First, a vata pacifying diet must be followed. In this diet there should be ample quantity of warm and unctuous drink and food-such as yellow mung beans in liquid preparations along with vegetables that are well cooked and juicy or soupy. The tastes are sweet, sour and salty. Whole rice, wheat, and small amounts of oats are permitted. Avoid green leafy vegetables, colored pumpkin and squash, peas, potato, sprouts, radish, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage and celery. Permitted are tender young eggplant (peeled), zucchini, cucumber, asparagus, tomato (skinned), carrots and spinach. Dairy products should be low in fat. Buttermilk and lassi are fine. Very small amounts of ghee are allowed.

Any of the oils are permitted, except coconut. They should be used very sparingly. All nuts and seeds are allowed in very small quantities. Honey should be avoided. Condiments are to be used in small amounts, preferring ginger, cumin,

fenugreek, mustard seeds, black pepper, cardamom, anise, fennel and cloves. Salty lemon juice and tamarind are especially good to pacify the unbalanced vata. Fruits should be limited to ripe fruits in season, avoiding the pungent, bitter, and astringent tastes. The secret to this diet is to eat sparingly, but be satisfied, and to enjoy eating the combinations and flavors that you appreciate. A most important aspect in treating this problem is to also consume at least 10 eight-ounce glasses of liquid daily.

For normal action to occur we need to have a good digestive fire, ample fluid and considerable roughage to permit the stool its normal consistency. The fluid intake is crucial and so is the muscular tone of the digestive tract and abdominal wall. This means that there must be some form of exercise that will aid this muscular tone. The best excercise is walking associated with yoga asanas that twist and compress the abdominal organs. Regular meals and activity is one of the keys to treating this condition. The mental attitude is also helpful in correcting the vata imbalance. Visualization is a great help in keeping the movements regular. By regular we mean setting times to wake up, get out of bed, exercise, eat, work, meditate, socialize, relax, etc.-and then follow that schedule meticulously. At first the body will want to rebel, but just stick to the schedule. Continued next month.

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