

The Scoop About Poop

May 2005 - Telluride Daily Planet

By Lynn Mayer, MA, CNC

What excites me as a health care practitioner can be quite entertaining. For example, when Oprah featured Dr. Oz and his honest discussion regarding the eliminative cycle of the bowels, I was out of my chair hoot'n and holler'n. I love it when the truth is told, when subjects that we "don't dare talk about" are brought to light.

When first consulting with my clients, I always inquire as to their bowel habits. This takes many by surprise. What takes me by surprise is how many people are disconnected from the importance of this natural bodily function as well as what they think normal is.

Practitioners of the wholistic kind are often called "bowl gazers". There is much that can be learned about one's health in observing the results in the bowl. The ideal scene is to get up from your task and see a smiley face bobbing in the bowl behind you. Dr. Oz referred to it as an "S" shape. It should be effortless and odorless. At a minimum you should have a bowel movement daily. The time of the day in the body's energy system that corresponds to the large intestine is from 5-7 a.m. Eliminating first thing in the morning is a sign of your body's connection to that cycle of nature. A healthy bowel movement after each meal is a sign of excellence.

Constipation is big business here in America, the money spent on products to force elimination. Loose stools can be artificially firmed up without addressing its source. The better approach is to find the underlying cause and resolve it on that level. A healthy bowel is essential. It's healing can clear up many other health issues.

One important function of your bowels is the elimination of toxins. Another is the production by the good bacteria in intestines of the B vitamins as well as Serotonin, the very neurotransmitter that we are busy trying to increase in our bodies through anti-depressants.

Here are some things for you to consider if you are not having healthy daily bowel movements:

Water – ½ ounce for every pound of body weight should be consumed daily. Water is reabsorbed into the body from the food bolus in the large intestine. If dehydrated, the body will look to the bowels for all it can get. This leaves little lubrication for elimination. Constipation may be the result.

Exercise – movement creates movement. Need I say more?

Emotions – under emotional stress, one of the first systems in the body to lock up or release with a vengeance is the large intestine. Addressing one's emotional state can go a long way in creating bowel health.

Fiber – it works like a sponge to absorb toxins as well as excess cholesterol and estrogens. It also acts as a brush to clean the inside of the colon. The average American consumes 4-15 grams per day; the RDA is 20-25 grams. The average *African* diet, however, in which no colon cancer was to be found, consists of 60 plus grams per day. We have room for improvement. Fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, seeds and beans increase your fiber intake. An excellent way to add fiber to your diet is to grind up 1-2 T. of Flax seeds (a coffee grinder will do). Sprinkle them onto your food or mix into water or juice. With the Flax you also benefit from the essential fatty acids present in the seed.

Gut Flora. The good bacteria of our intestines provide many functions and are killed off dramatically with antibiotic use. Use a good quality probiotic (acidophilus) not only to replenish your gut flora, but also as daily ritual to keep your colon working to your advantage.

Additional underlying causes in bowel dysfunction are the lack of a gall bladder - as the bile it produces is a lubricant – as well as food intolerances which create a leaky gut, the mother of all health issues. My encouragement: seek guidance. A healthy colon is worth having.