

# How Often Should I Poop, and Other Toilet Topics

## Let's talk about poop.

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And gas. And why sometimes the two are more frequent or fragrant than usual. Giggle all you want, but knowing a little more about what's going on (or coming out, rather) down there may help you realize what's "normal" and what should be brought to the attention of a physician. To help get the facts straight, U.S. News consulted with [Robynne Chutkan](#), a Washington, D.C.-based gastroenterologist and author of "Gutbliss: A 10-Day Plan to Ban Bloat, Flush Toxins and Dump Your Digestive Baggage."

And every poop is different. No. 2 can take a range of shades, sizes, textures and shapes – as shown (with images!) by the [Bristol Stool Scale](#), which classifies seven types of feces. Why does your poop look the way it does? It often reflects your dietary habits, as Tamara Duker Freuman, an [Eat + Run](#) blogger and dietitian specialized in digestive disorders, explains in "[What Your Poo Says About You.](#)"

**Next: [Pooping three times a day is normal – and so is pooping three times a week.](#)**

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There's a wide range for what's "normal," because, again, everyone is different. Go more than three days without a movement, and you're likely [constipated](#). This is a common, rarely serious problem that a well-balanced, high-fiber [diet](#) and plenty of fluids can help

prevent and alleviate.

## **You should talk to your doctor about prolonged or painful constipation.**

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If the constipation lasts longer than a few weeks, is associated with pain or weight loss, or is disabling, see your doctor. [The American Gastroenterological Association](#) also advises you consult with a health care provider before trying [laxatives](#).

## **Frequent, incomplete bowels can usually be attributed to diet.**

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Diet is typically the No. 1 factor in determining No. 2 consistency. “Smearly” stools, as Chutkan puts it (which often require several wipes), as well as incomplete, “stuttering bowel movements” (when you go once and then have to go again), can often be fixed by [upping your fiber](#) and fluid intake.

## **Foods determine the smell of poop.**

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While, true, your stool will never smell like roses – and wouldn’t that be unsettling if it did? – most can attest that some movements are more fragrant than others. Sulfur-rich foods like meat, seafood, yogurt and [eggs](#) will produce a more pungent poop, Chutkan says. So now you know.

## **Farts happen – probably more often than you think.**

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Some estimates have us passing gas an average of **12 to 20 times per day!** Chutkan estimates that gas concerns are the most common reasons patients come to see her. “I tell them, ‘Look, everyone has gas,’” she says. Concerned with odor? A tweak in your diet may help, given that various foods such as cabbage and beans can produce smellier gas. Antibiotics can affect odor, too.

**At some point, you should see a doctor about serious gas.**

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Chutkan says gas is really only a concern if it’s associated with abdominal pain, blood in the stool, weight loss, **nausea** or vomiting. If you experience these issues, she recommends seeing your health care provider.

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