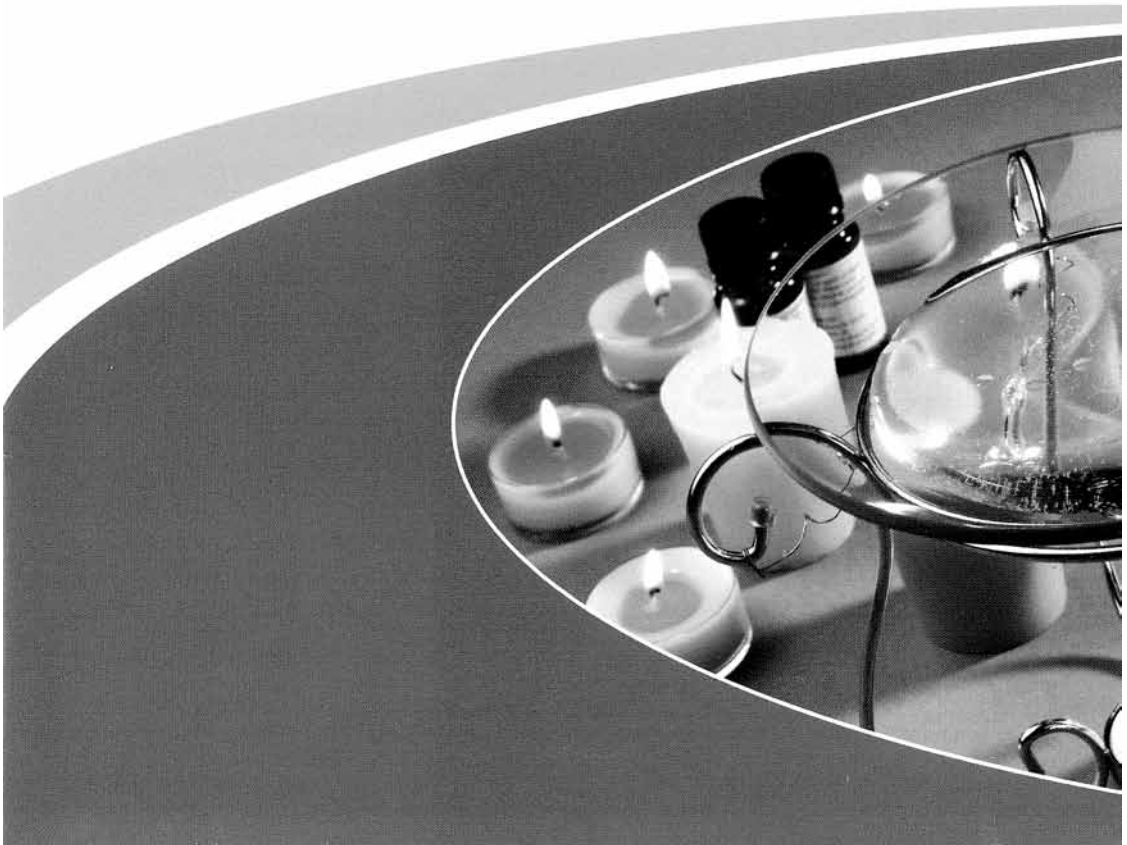


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alternative therapies
and constipation

*diet and lifestyle in the
management of constipation*



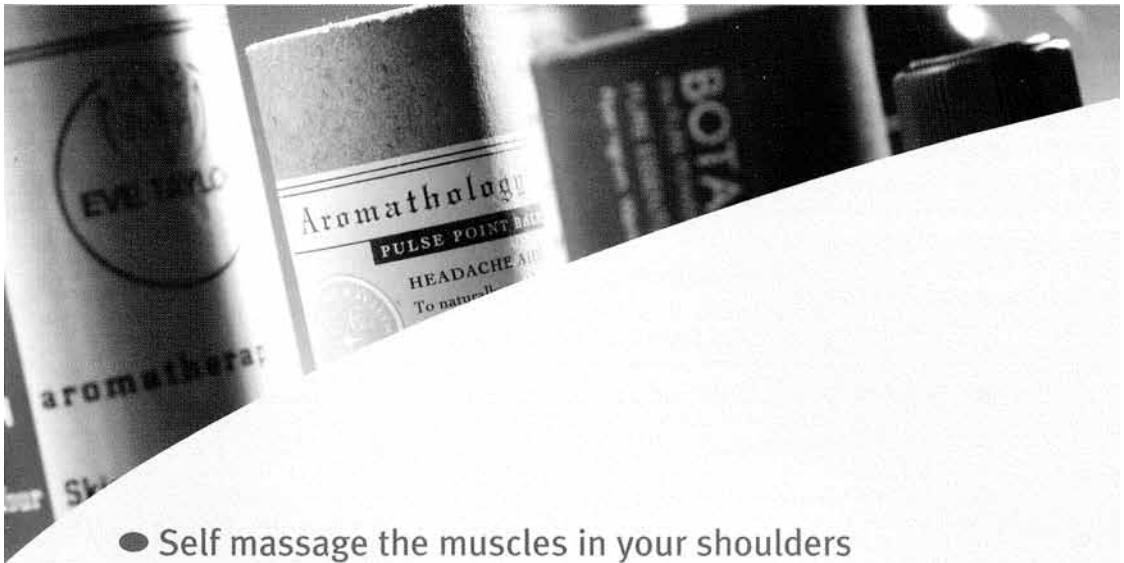
This booklet describes some ideas to help you relax which MAY help your constipation.

relaxation

- Try having a long leisurely soak in the bath. Soaking in body-temperature water is effective at helping you unwind. For an added benefit use aromatic oils.
- Pamper your body after bathing. Dusting powders, creams and lotions such as rose and lavender re-moisturise the skin.
- Burning candles and using incense or aromatic oil-burners will help create the mood for relaxing. Sit quietly with eyes closed, mind switched off and breath in the beneficial aromas for 10 minutes.
- Meditation and gentle yoga stretches will quieten the mind and release body tension. Sit or lie down, close your eyes and focus on breathing in and out slowly.
- Listening to music may help you relax because it is a good mood lifter and antidote for anxiety.
- Make sure you have some quiet time to yourself during the day where you can go for a walk or read a book.
- Massages are a great way to help your body and mind let go and unwind.

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- Self massage the muscles in your shoulders and upper back by using your hands in a squeezing movement. Move your hand firmly along the top of your shoulder to the neck and then back. If you feel any tension spots apply circular pressure with your fingers. Repeat on the other shoulder.

what can an abdominal massage do for your constipation?

It may help in the elimination of waste products by:

- Encouraging the bowel to move.
- Assisting in the bowel opening.

It may also:

- Stabilise bowel patterns.
- Relieve wind.

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are there any other advantages of a massage?

- Reduces anxiety.
- Reduces psychological distress.
- There are no known side effects unlike certain laxatives.
- Can be used with other types of therapy.



- Pleasant, relaxing and safe technique.
- Easy to learn the technique.
- Once you are trained, it can be done by yourself.

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are massages suitable for everyone?

Before you proceed with a massage you should check with your GP or carer to see if you are suitable for an abdominal massage.



You should not receive a massage if you have:

- Bowel cancer.
- Hernia.
- Had recent surgery or scarring.
- Received radiotherapy to the abdomen in the last six weeks.
- Known or suspected abdominal obstruction.
- A large abdominal mass (unless permission has been given by medical staff).

who should perform the massage?

Abdominal massages should be administered by staff fully trained in the technique.

The trained staff member may teach you how to self-massage.

other massage tips

- The massage should be performed every day.
- The best time for the massage to be performed is early morning when there is more movement in the bowel, but it can be effective at other times too.
- A massage lotion can be used to make massage strokes more comfortable.
- There are a variety of lotions that can be used such as a non-perfumed white lotion which has essential oils added to it e.g. Black Pepper, Roman Chamomile.

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acupuncture

- There is some evidence this treatment can help constipation.
- See a qualified Acupuncturist.

reflexology

- Massaging the reflexes present in your feet can benefit the whole body.
- Rest your foot on the knee of your opposite leg and using firm circular motions massage the sole.
- Use a firm thumb pressure to ease painful areas of tension.
- Repeat with the other foot.

See a qualified reflexologist for specific treatments.

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Remember you can help your constipation by:

- Being more active: remember to drink more.
- Drinking plenty of fluid: about 8-10 cups per day – try soft drinks and not too much strong tea or coffee.
- Eating more fibre rich foods such as wholegrain breads, cereals and porridge: remember to drink plenty.



- Eating more fruit and vegetables.
- Listening to your body: go to the toilet when it tells you to and leave enough time for toileting.

You may find you have some bloating and wind at first – but as your bowel becomes used to the extra fibre this will settle down.

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