



Do Vegans Actually Poop More? 5 Things You Need to Know

By Dana Hudepohl
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Diet has a direct impact on the digestive tract—a fact that vegans can attest to firsthand. If you’ve recently transitioned to a plant-based diet or are simply looking to improve your bowel health, here are some things to keep in mind.

1. Vegans poop more.

It’s true: Vegans poop more. A [University of Oxford study](#) of 20,000 people found that vegans poop more than vegetarians who poop more than meat eaters. Eating a healthy vegan diet (i.e., rich in fruits, veggies, and [whole grains](#)) makes it easy to exceed the recommended 25 to 30 grams of fiber a day, and it’s not unusual for that to translate into daily poops for vegans—or two or three!

2. It’s about quality, not quantity.

More important than how often you poop is experiencing a sense of total relief afterward, usually a welcomed side effect of eating plant-based. Without this sense of satisfaction, you could be constipated—even if you poop every day or have diarrhea (called overflow). “The goal is to sit on the toilet for less than three minutes and to have a soft poop that comes out without pushing or straining,” says Dr. Sarina Pasricha, MD, MSCR, a gastroenterologist specializing in gut motility.

3. You can be plant-based and still constipated.

A plant-based diet lays the foundation for healthy poop (especially when it includes flax and chia seeds), but other factors, such as hormonal changes, play a role. Regular exercise and water help move food through the colon. Stress-reduction techniques such as [yoga](#) and meditation can help, too. Pasricha diagnoses about 50 percent of constipated WFPB patients with pelvic floor dysfunction, where muscles that are supposed to relax during pooping actually tighten up. The fix? Pelvic floor physical therapy.

4. Look before you flush.

Consult the “[Bristol stool chart](#)” (the poster you’ll find in any GI doctor’s office) and get to know the illustration for Type 4. That’s your shooting star: poop formed like a long, bulky, soft sausage or snake, smooth without lumps. Sixty percent of stool’s weight comes from gut bacteria of the microbiome. When you feed gut bacteria the fiber-rich plant foods they prefer, they thrive and multiply; as a result, you have larger BMs, says [Dr. Will Bulsiewicz, MD, MSCI](#), a gastroenterologist and author of *Fiber Fueled*.

5. Treat poop like a vital sign.

When your poop is off, it’s a red flag that your gut bacteria aren’t being treated with TLC. Heed the warning. Since gut health is integral to *all* health, dysbiosis may manifest into other disease states, says Bulsiewicz. Constipation can precede diagnosis of Parkinson’s disease by as many as 20 years and is common in up to two-thirds of patients. It’s also linked to an increased risk for breast cancer, according to a study in the [Cancer Epidemiological Biomarkers](#), and mood disorders. Tend to your gut microbes with a diverse menu of 30 different kinds of plants per week, and if you see pencil-thin poops or blood, or don’t feel like you’re completely emptying your bowels, call your doc for a workup.