How Does Constipation Affect Overactive Bladder?

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Constipation and Overactive Bladder

You may have noticed if you have gone to see your urologist before that they ask you questions about your bowel movements, and they may even show you a chart with pictures for you to gingerly point at what kind of stool you usually have.

Some doctors are good at sharing why they are asking these questions, and some are not. Because you went there to talk about a different sensitive subject, right? Well, they are not asking these questions to judge you or make you feel uncomfortable, there is a reason these questions are asked.

They're checking to see if you are constipated.

What is Constipation?

Constipation is when there is the stool that sits in your colon for too long, and the fluid that was once in your stool gets reabsorbed into your body. The stool is then slower and collects in your colon and can be very uncomfortable.

How Does Constipation Affect Your Bladder?

In general, being constipated can have an impact on people with OAB to the effect of your bowels being full of too much stool, therefore pushing on your bladder.

Constipation also might irritate your bladder to have wet or dry OAB (with urinary incontinence or without). As well, your doctor is going to want to know if you suffer from chronic constipation as they may prescribe medication that may leave you at risk of becoming constipated, as they are going to want to treat your OAB and not make it worse. You also may need to be treated for constipation as well, if that is the case.

However, it can go both ways. For instance, you may suffer from functional constipation which can lead to OAB symptoms. Or you may suffer from OAB, and your OAB is more severe when you have undiscovered constipation.

Without question, both ailments can affect each other, and it is not uncommon for it to do so, as well the likeliness of both occurring without treatment increases with age.

Treatment for Constipation and Overactive Bladder

So, what do we do about this?

First, we need to be upfront with ourselves and with our doctors and tell them exactly what is going on. OAB is

difficult enough, however, it will only benefit us if we can talk openly about it. One way or another, we need to void, and we need to defecate.

Let’s try and find an easier way to do that.

Drink More Water and Consume More Fiber

Fortunately, the treatments for OAB and constipation are similar. We can try dietary changes by drinking more water and consuming more fiber. One way of doing that is to drink psyllium fiber, that way you are guaranteeing water and fiber intake. Fiber helps not only with loose stool but also with constipation, so it is a good thing for your overall health.

Having regular bowel movements is usually based on what you put into your body. Severe constipation is having about one bowel movement a week and can put your pelvic floor in danger by damaging the nerves and its neurological functions. This then puts our OAB in danger and may become difficult to control.

Eat a High-Fiber Diet

If we can introduce or include more fiber-rich foods like oatmeal, whole-grain loaves of bread, apples, brown rice, carrots, popcorn, and nuts, we may be saving our bladders as well as our colons.

Diet is so important to these vital organs. But diet might not be enough.

Include Activity in Your Lifestyle

Something else that we may be tired of hearing from every single doctor, but we may need to get more exercise. If nothing else, doing small movements like Kegel exercises. It is proven to strengthen the pelvic floor for both our sphincter and bladder.

However, ask your doctor if it is recommended for you to do them. You may already have a strong pelvic floor. But it is good to learn how to do Kegel exercises in case you need to down the line. The best thing is, men and women can both practice Kegels. Your pelvic floor will thank you!

In some cases, you may need to “evacuate” the colon and take laxatives to help clean it out. It may take a few days, but it is important to give your colon a break from constipation if you can’t have a movement naturally.

The Takeaway

A short conversation with your doctor may be all you need to start fixing your constipation and OAB. It takes a little hard work, a little diligence, but we may be able to alleviate some symptoms of OAB. Not all of the time is constipation related to OAB or vice versa. But when it is, it can be like fighting a constant battle of conquering one without conquering the other.

With a little help, we can fight them in conjunction with one another, and work our way towards a healthy colon and a healthy bladder.