

Massaging your tummy to help ease constipation

Pelvic Floor and Bowel Function

Information for Patients

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Introduction

Tummy (abdominal) massage is using your hands to stroke and press the soft tissue of your tummy to help with the symptoms of constipation. This can help poo to move around your bowel.

Abdominal massage is done in a clockwise direction around where your bowel naturally sits. The massage should take about 15 to 20 minutes.

Why should I do this?

- Speeds up the time it takes poo to pass around your tummy.
- Relieves wind/cramps which can help with stomach pain.
- Softens poo to make it easier to pass.

How do I do abdominal massage?

Lie on your back with a pillow under your knees. You can use unperfumed creams and oils to help massage. Cold oils such as rapeseed oil or vegetable oil may be something you have anyway. If you do have sensitive skin or eczema the GP may be able to give you an alternative.

The massage begins with a gentle relaxing stroke up the abdominal wall.

Please note: If you have a hiatus hernia or reflux the direction of this stroke is reversed.

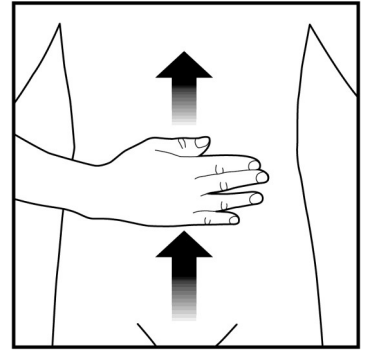
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Step 1: Stroking

1. Place your flat hand at the bottom of your stomach.
2. Gently stroke upwards toward your rib cage.
3. Repeat 10 times.

Please note: If you have a hiatus hernia or reflux the direction of this stroke is reversed. This means you will stroke down towards your legs.

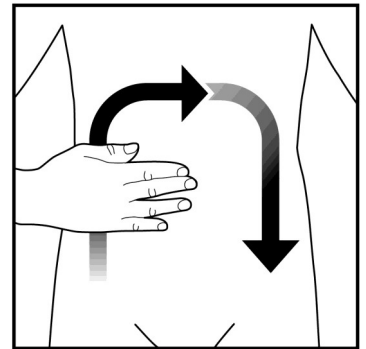


Step 2: Circular stroking movements (Effleurage)

These strokes follow the direction of the bowel.

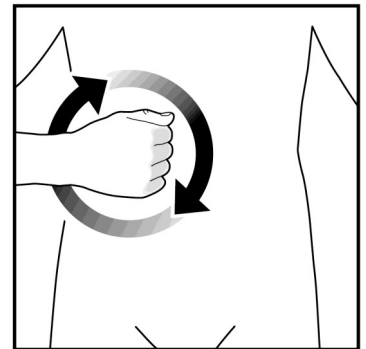
1. Start on the **right hand side** of your lower stomach.
2. Move upwards and then across to the left hand side and down.

Repeat this several times with more pressure. This will help the poo move along the bowel. Do this for **2 minutes**.



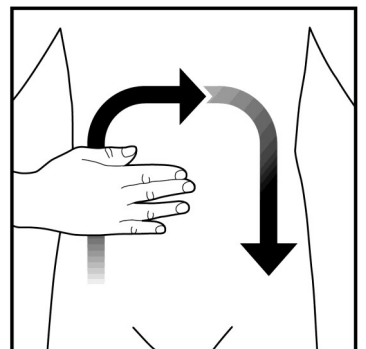
Step 3: Kneading

1. Start with your hand in a fist on the upper right abdomen just below ribcage. You can add other hand over first for added pressure.
2. Do deep circular movements along the colon. This part of the massage may sometimes be uncomfortable because of the deep compression. Do this for **2 minutes**.



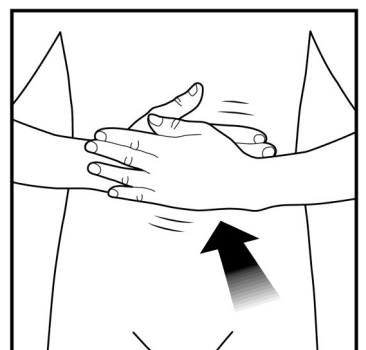
Step 4: Effleurage

1. You then repeat step 2 for 2 minutes
2. Follow this with doing step 1 for up to 1 minute.



Step 5: Vibrations

Finish the massage with vibration over the tummy (abdominal wall) to relieve farting (flatus). Vibrate your hand over your tummy to do this.





Are there any side-effects or risks?

This massage is not suitable for anyone with the following:

- Unstable spinal injuries,
- Pregnancy,
- Inflammatory bowel disease,
- Tummy (abdominal) wounds which are less than 6 weeks old,

Contact details

For any urgent advice please speak to your GP or call NHS 111.

Pelvic Floor Conservative Management Clinic:

Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm call 0116 258 3775

Answer phone messages are picked up in between clinic.

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