

Constipation-Bloating First-Step Checklist

Use this before you tighten your diet any further.

1. Check the constipation pattern

- stools are hard, dry, or hard to pass
- you are straining
- you feel incompletely emptied afterward
- bloating improves after a better bowel movement

If several of these are true, stool backup may be a major part of the bloating story.

2. Fix the day structure first

- eat regular meals instead of long gaps plus random grazing
 - drink enough fluid across the day
 - stop ignoring the urge to go when possible
 - give yourself one predictable bathroom window each day
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3. Review the fiber pattern

- add fiber gradually, not all at once
 - prefer soluble-fiber options when IBS-type bloating is active
 - do not rely only on crackers, chips, cheese, and beige snack foods
 - add produce and fluid back into the plan
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4. Add movement

- get regular physical activity
 - consider a short walk after meals
 - use a footstool or more comfortable posture if bowel movements feel difficult
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5. Escalate when needed

- talk to a clinician if symptoms keep returning despite self-care
 - ask about PEG or other constipation support if basics are not enough
 - seek urgent review for vomiting, blood, severe pain, fever, or inability to pass gas
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Reminder

Not every bloating flare starts with food restriction. If constipation is active, treating the backup first is often the smarter move.