



► Fostering is an ideal activity for people that love animals but cannot commit to having a lifelong pet in China.



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# JAR's

## Constipation in Cats

### What Is Constipation?

Constipation - difficult or infrequent bowel movements - is one of the most common health problems associated with a pet's digestive system. Cats usually have at least one healthy bowel movement every day. But if your cat is passing dry, hard stools, straining when trying to defecate or making unsuccessful trips to the litter box, please see your veterinarian. These symptoms may indicate an underlying health problem.

### How Can I Tell if My Cat Is Constipated?

If your cat suffers from any of the following symptoms, please consult your veterinarian. These signs may also be symptoms of urinary disorders, so it's important that your vet helps you to determine the cause right away:

- Straining or crying out in pain when trying to eliminate
- Small, dry, hard stools, possibly covered in mucous or blood
- Frequent, unproductive trips to the litter box
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Displays of abdominal discomfort
- Lack of grooming

### What Causes Cats to Become Constipated?

There are many reasons why your cat may have trouble eliminating:

- Low-fiber diet

- Dehydration
- Hairballs/excessive grooming
- Blocked or abscessed anal sacs
- Enlarged prostate gland
- Tangled hair on the buttocks
- Ingestion of foreign objects such as string, cloth, bones, etc.
- Side effect of medication
- Tumor or other intestinal obstruction
- Neurologic disorder
- Obesity
- Abnormal colon shape or motility

### How Can I Treat My Cat's Constipation?

Depending on what's causing your cat's constipation, your vet may recommend one or several of the following treatments:

- Stool softener
- Laxative
- Enema (administered by a professional, not at home, please).  
It is important to note that cats do not take kindly to these procedures, and some over-the-counter enemas contain substances that can be toxic to cats. This is a procedure best left to your veterinarian.
- Medication to increase the contractile strength of the large intestine
- Manual evacuation of the bowels
- Surgery to remove obstruction in the bowels
- Veterinarian-prescribed, high-fiber diet
- Adding fiber to your cat's diet with canned pumpkin, bran



## Jaiya's Animal Rescue

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- i. Increase in water consumption
- j. Increase in exercise

### Which Cats Are Susceptible to Constipation?

Elderly pets often suffer from infrequent or difficult bowel movements. However, the condition can occur in any cat who doesn't eat adequate fiber, get enough water or exercise, or suffers from one or more of the causes of constipation.

### Can Constipation Hint at Larger Health Problems?

Yes. Constipation should always be investigated, as it can be a symptom of diabetes, hyperthyroidism, an obstruction of the rectum or a hernia.

### How Can I Prevent My Cat from Becoming Constipated?

Feed your cat a healthy high-fiber diet with minimal treats, provide access all day to clean, fresh water and make sure she gets exercise. Brushing your cat regularly will minimize chances of hair-balls, which can lead to constipation.

### What Can Happen If Constipation Goes Untreated?

If your cat's constipation is not alleviated, obstipation - the inability to empty her colon on her own - can occur. In this state, the colon is packed with an uncomfortably large amount of feces, causing unproductive straining, lethargy, appetite loss and possibly even vomiting. This can result in the swelling of your cat's colon and loss of the colon's motility.



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