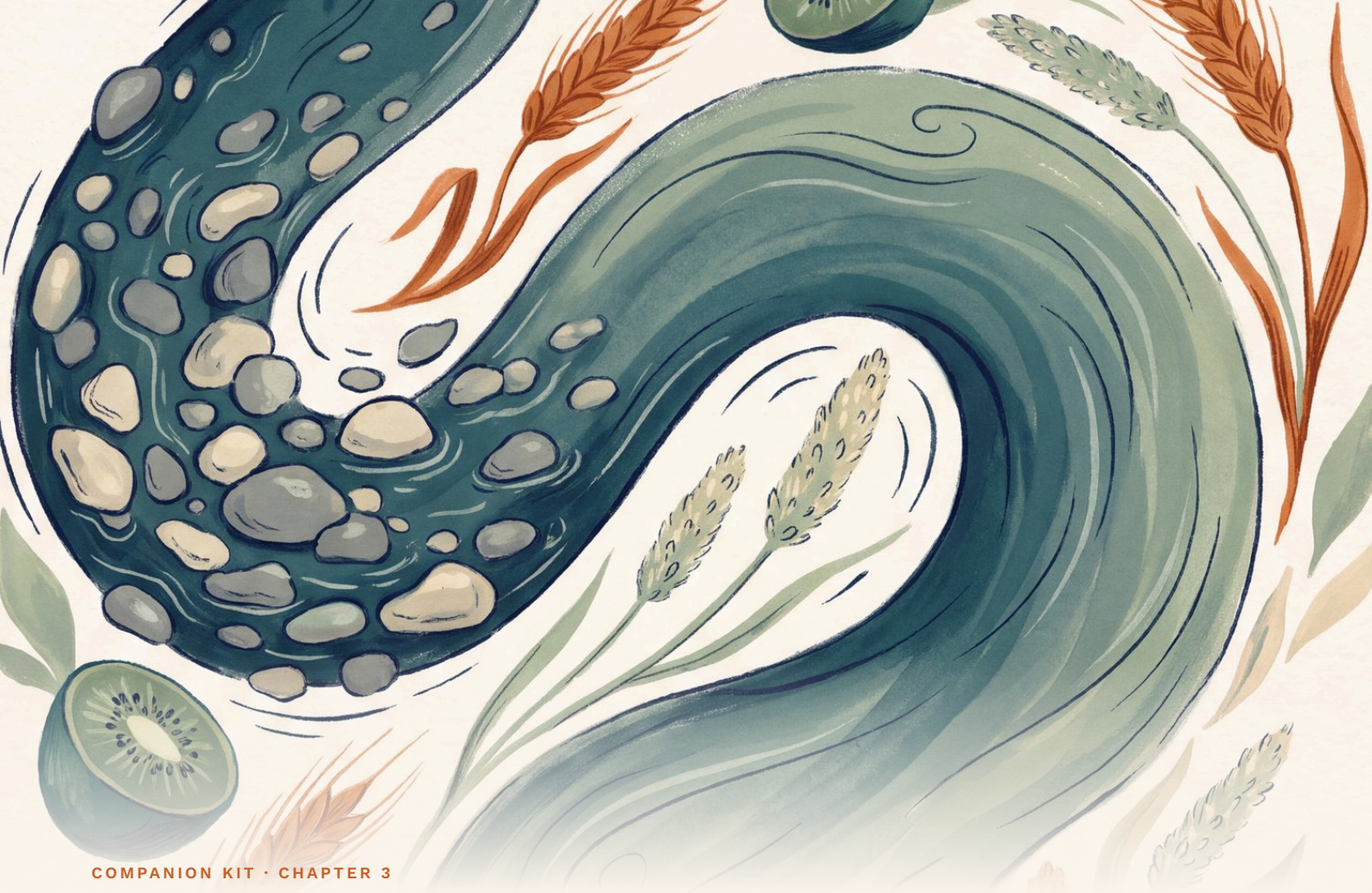


COMPANION KIT · CHAPTER 3

My Constipation Toolkit

A 2-week plan, a practical checklist and a daily diary for constipation, with a page to prepare for a conversation about your bowels and a page to review how it went. Print it, or fill it in on screen.

Start

Read the safety notes on the first page.

Track

Follow the plan and fill in the diary each day.

Review

Use the last page to decide what to do next.

INSIDE

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My Constipation Toolkit

For adults. General information and diary pages to use alongside advice from your own doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Never stop or change a prescribed medicine without the prescriber's agreement. Read the safety page before using this workbook.

EMERGENCY NOW

Heavy or nonstop rectal bleeding, large clots, collapse or sudden severe abdominal pain require emergency care.

GET MEDICAL ADVICE

Urgent advice for black/dark-red stool or bloody diarrhoea. See a doctor for persistent constipation, recurrent pain/bloating, blood, unexplained weight loss, tiredness, sudden bowel changes or medicine-related constipation.

USING FIBRE AND LAXATIVES SAFELY

Follow the product leaflet and pharmacist's advice. Psyllium needs the specified water and medicine spacing. Discuss swallowing problems, past blockage or narrowed bowel first. Ask before laxatives in pregnancy or with heart/kidney disease, IBD or opioid use.

IF LAXATIVES DO NOT HELP

Do not strain hard or sit for long. OTC laxatives are not an open-ended self-treatment: seek advice if they do not help after three days, and do not continue unsupervised beyond seven days. Soft stool with straining/blockage may need specialist assessment.

My main question / professional already involved

A 2-week plan

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

Choose the steps that suit you. You do not need to do all of them.

Days 1–3 · Make space for routine

Record bowel movements and straining. Allow an unhurried toilet opportunity after breakfast, respond to the urge, and use a suitable footstool if comfortable. Move and drink regularly within your care plan.

Days 4–7 · Discuss a tolerable fibre step

Choose a gradual change from the chapter. If using psyllium, confirm dose, water and medicine-spacing instructions with the leaflet or pharmacist. Record tolerance rather than increasing automatically.

Days 8–14 · Review comfort, not just frequency

Continue appropriate steps. Ask a pharmacist about persistent hard stools or no bowel movement for three days. Do not select or extend a laxative course from this worksheet.

Day 15 and week 4 · Review

Discuss ongoing symptoms. Fibre trials can require at least four weeks, but warning signs need care immediately. Persistent straining with soft stool deserves assessment, not endless extra fibre.

The one step I choose first

Review date and who I will contact if needed

My practical checklist

Tick what you have done and note what to do next.

- [ ] I have checked the red flags, and none apply (or I have seen my doctor)
- [ ] I have asked whether any of my medicines could be the cause
- [ ] I eat breakfast and then give myself unhurried time on the toilet
- [ ] I never ignore the urge to go
- [ ] I use a footstool so my knees are above my hips
- [ ] I walk for 20 to 30 minutes most days and drink regularly
- [ ] If using fibre or psyllium, I have confirmed suitability, dose, water and medicine-spacing instructions with the leaflet or pharmacist, and will build gradually.
- [ ] I eat two green kiwifruit a day (or prunes if I am not bloated)
- [ ] I know which laxative to try first, and for how long
- [ ] I keep a bowel diary and reviewed it on day 15

One question this checklist raised

My repeatable diary

Print a fresh page whenever you need one.

Today

Date

Bowel movements: time and Bristol type (1-2 hard, 3-4 comfortable, 5-7 loose)

Straining (0 to 10)

Felt completely empty (yes or no)

Bloating score (0 to 10)

Fluids (glasses)

Minutes of walking

Notes: what helped, what made it worse

What I ate

Breakfast

Psyllium dose

Kiwifruit or prunes

Other meals and snacks

Steps practised

Toilet time after breakfast

Footstool

Walk

Psyllium

Kiwifruit or prunes

Laxative (name and dose)

Overview · days 1–14

A short summary of your diary. Leave a gap on days you do not record.

Scores are your own notes. A pattern here cannot show a food intolerance, a medicine effect or an IBS type.

Day / date	Bowel count / stool type	Straining 0–10	Emptying yes / no	Routine / notes
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				

What helped, what was difficult, and what else might explain a change?

My bowel-care conversation

Bring this page and your diary to a pharmacist or doctor.

My usual pattern

Frequency, stool type, straining, emptying and when it changed.

What I have already tried

Food, fluids, movement and product names, dose and dates.

My full medicine list

Include painkillers, iron, prescriptions, supplements and herbs.

What I need to ask

Which option is suitable? How long? What if it does not help?

Agreed plan and review

Professional’s name, instructions, contact date and week-four review.

Review and next steps

Warning signs always need earlier care.

What changed, if anything?

Compare similar days and note gaps; no improvement is also useful information.

What might explain it?

Food, stress, sleep, medicines, timing and natural variation may overlap.

What I will keep or stop recording

Choose a manageable routine; stop burdensome tracking or a practice that causes distress.

What needs a professional conversation?

Questions, care contact, agreed action and follow-up date.