

# Medicinal treatment of constipation

Laxatives are roughly divided into three categories:

## Bulk-forming laxatives

- fibre products are hydrophilic colloids
- they can be prepared e.g. from psyllium seeds or wheat bran
- they retain water and thus increase the amount of stool mass improving peristalsis
- the effect is slow over several days
- with diarrhoea, on the other hand, the fibres bind fluid and solidify stools
- no serious side effects from these types of products
  
- products such as VI-Siblin

## Osmotic and stool-softening laxatives

- these include lactulose, polyethylene glycol/macrogol
- increase the amount of water in your stool (if necessary up to diarrhoea, smaller doses soften stool)
- they empty your colon mechanically
- are highly effective laxatives
- can be used for a long period of time
- if necessary, can be administered via a nasogastric tube.
- high doses may cause e.g. swelling, diarrhoea, abdominal pain
- works after about 24-48 hours depending on the dose
  
- products such as Duphalac, Pegorion

## Stimulant laxatives

- this type of medicine works by increasing bowel movement through different mechanisms directly to the bowel walls
- continuous use affects bowel movement by weakening it, which is why the products are for temporary use only
- for example, for emptying the bowel before surgical procedures, post-operative constipation, treating severe constipation
- recommended to be used only when other methods do not bring relief
- works within approximately 6-8 hours
  
- preparations such as Laxoberon, Toilax

In a case of difficult constipation, a miniature enema can be used to relieve the constipation, after which the use of Pegorion, for example, is resumed. If necessary, a water enema may also be administered, which is larger in volume; however, there is a small risk of perforation. Preparations such as Microlax, Klyx.