

Keto and Poop - Something We Need to Talk About | WOD Tools

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Keto and Poop – Something We Need to Talk About

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If you're squeamish or hate the thought of talking about the fascinating world (to some of us) of poop, poo, or faeces, or shit, look away. It's about to get stinky. The keto diet raises a lot of questions about our bowel movements and our poop. We all want to know but it's not something we talk about out loud.

Poop is intrinsically connected to health. The 'quality' of what you leave in the toilet on a (hopefully) daily basis can be a good indicator of your overall state of wellness. Bad poop often equals bad health.

And CrossFitters, don't tell me you never discuss your keto diet and toilet habits with your best buddy at the gym! We all do.

What Should my Poop Smell Like?

Earth. Think about the soft earth in your garden. Pick up some dirt and smell it. Unless you live in a very dry region, you'll notice the mild smell of poo, like animal poo. The earth in a healthy garden is teeming with life. This life is eating, digesting, and defecating and you can smell it all just by putting your nose to a clump of earth.

Your own waste should smell something like that. The leave-the-room in haste type smells that so often send people running from bathrooms is not healthy. If you can't even stand the smell of your own or other people ask for a gas mask before entering the bathroom after you've done your business, you probably don't have **optimal gut health**.

My brother often described his newborn baby's poo smell like baked bread. She was breastfed and her parents ate organic natural foods. Her microbiome is bulletproofed. As a result, her poo

was almost pleasant to smell.

From my own experiences, eating a keto diet has changed the general smell of the objects I leave in the toilet. Yep, I take a sniff. It's not icky. It's natural. The smell is of earth, most of the time. I eat fat, animal products and earthy green leafy veg. These are all natural products which decompose or can be digested. So why wouldn't my poo smell like that? The closer we get to nature and natural eating, the closer our waste products smell like natural products too.

How Often Should You Poop?

There's no hard and fast rule to this. Once a day is good. Five times a day is bad. Once a week should be a signal to see a medical professional. Changes in diet, fasting, and stress all play a part in the frequency of your bathroom visits.

And by the way, the proper way to poop is to squat when using the toilet. (off topic but if you're reading this blog then I guess you're interested in all aspects of health like me). The toilet, in reality, is an abomination. Designed by Victorians obsessed with seats. Sitting to relieve oneself was seen as the civilised way to do the business we've been doing perfectly well for millennia by squatting down.

Once we lost the ability to squat (thanks to chairs) we lost the ability to poop correctly and had to rely on the porcelain tube. Sitting to poop puts your colon in a suboptimal position and can cause haemorrhoids and constipation.

Squat to poop and you'll feel better about it.

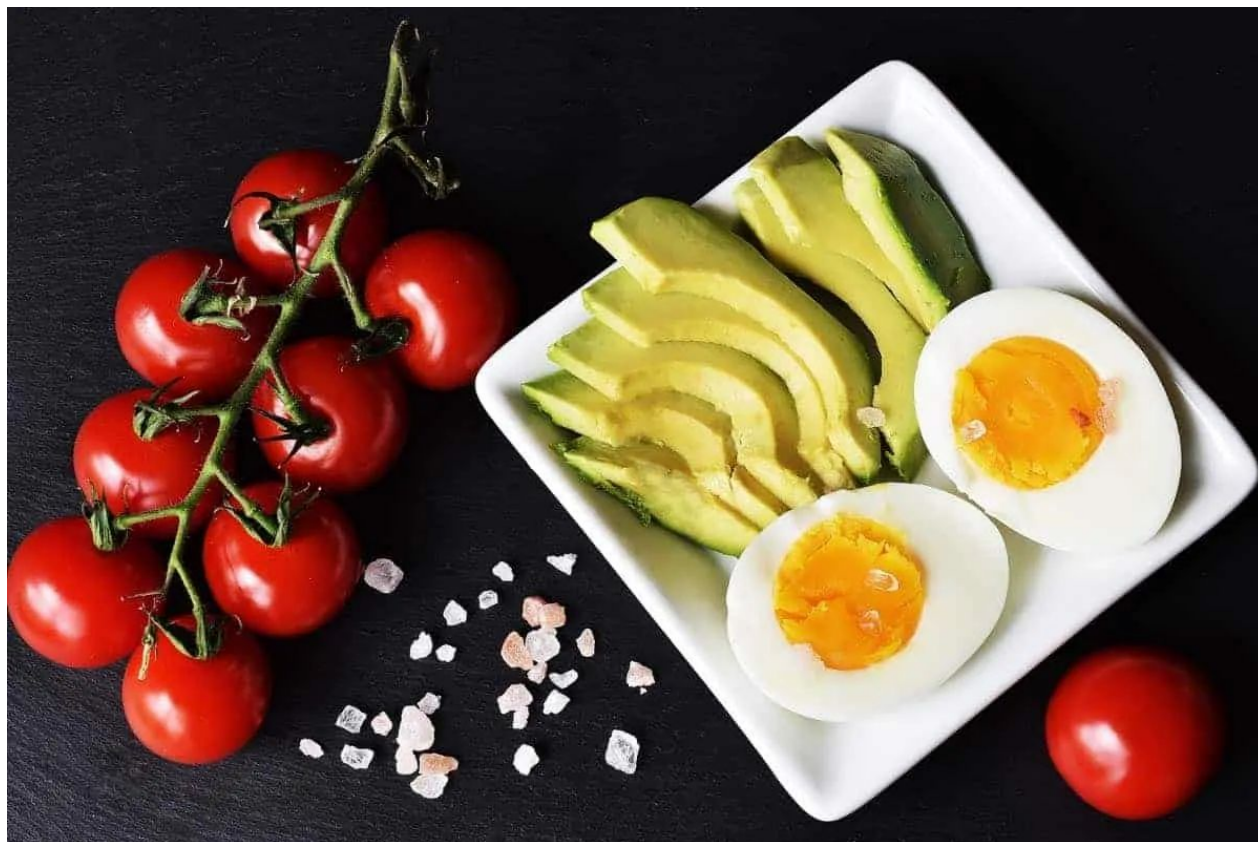
Low Carbohydrates and Bowel Movements

Is it normal to have fewer bowel movements when you reduce your carb intake? Personal experience says yes, but I wasn't a big carb eater in the first place. I also have (or had – possible cured) a mild form of colitis, which meant I had to stay away from very fibrous foods and anything that might irritate my bowels. Uncooked broccoli, for example, was a no go.

But since I've been eating keto, these problems haven't surfaced. I eat plenty of broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and nuts now with no adverse effects. I've no evidence to prove it but I believe the healthy fats (as well as the unhealthy ones) help to protect the lining of my stomach from stinky veg and tough to digest foods.

I wasn't diagnosed as such but I was sure (disclaimer: self-diagnosis) that I had **Irritable Bowel Syndrome** (IBS). This is quite a 'trendy' condition to have. Along with Coeliac disease and gluten

Syndrome (IBS). This is quite a trendy condition to have. Along with Coeliac disease and gluten intolerance, the Internet is bursting with people that claim to have some kind of issue with their food and their bowels. I'm one, of course, but eating a low-carb diet seems to have helped. I no longer feel any irritation and toilet visits are far fewer than before. A study in 2009 found that low carbohydrates diets [improve the quality of life of IBS](#) sufferers.



I've also witnessed the effects that bread and other starchy carbs have on people close to me. 5-6 sprints to the toilet after eating a few slices of bread and honey is not uncommon. I always wonder why people put themselves through this.

Back to the topic. Keto and bowel movements. A recent study (2018) found that low carbohydrate regime followers had fewer visits to the toilet, smaller poops, and interestingly, less excreted [bifidobacteria](#) (an important guy bacteria) than high carbohydrate eaters.

Following a keto diet or being in ketosis will improve your bowel health and force you to visit the bathroom less. You'll also spend less time on bowel movements and the poop will be smaller. It's understandable: Ketogenic diets follow a more natural eating regime. The body doesn't have to deal with processed foods (most carbs). Foods that might irritate the gut reduce and nutrients that improve the gut flora increase.

The average person has 1 or 2 bowel movements a day. Once every few days means you're either fasting or constipated. Once every hour means you have IBS or a more serious problem (see a

doctor).

Keto shouldn't change this much but it affects people in different ways. Some see an increase in frequency and some experience the opposite effect. Most people do not notice an increase in volume.

Ketosis Poop Color

Many people talk about the negative effects of the ketogenic diet on their poop. I don't see why it warrants a lot of time. It's unpleasant to have runny poo, but it will not change your life. In my case, the consistency has been, well, consistent. I don't have an issue with runny, messy poops and every bowel movement has been similar. Solid, dark, with an earthy smell.

Apparently, light coloured stools are common among ultra low carb dieters. I'm talking about the extreme *low-carbers* that go for almost zero carbs a day. If your stool turns white or very light, you might have digestive problems. You could also have excess fat in your poop. This makes sense as we [consume a lot more fat](#). But if the fat is not being digested, you need to find out why.

Pale-colored poop can also indicate more serious diseases such as cancer. Don't panic, but don't ignore it.

You might notice that your poop has deepened in color. Dark green/brown is common. People that eat a lot of leafy greens, dark chocolate might notice a deepening of the color of their poop. There's nothing to worry about here. Carry on as you were! And keep eating those greens.



Keto Diarrhea

If you look on Reddit and other ketogenic diet forums, it won't take long before you stumbled across people talking about keto and diarrhea (or diarrhoea for non-Americans)

An important thing to remember for keto beginners is that your digestive system will take a while to adapt to a low carbohydrate, high-fat diet and growing pains, sometimes in the form of diarrhoea, can result. The problem is often due to dehydration, a lack of minerals, or the increase in a particular food that your gut flora is not used to.

If you're low or high in certain electrolytes (important nutrients) you may experience diarrhoea. The electrolytes Sodium, Magnesium, and Potassium are of particular importance to low carb dieters as there's a tendency for the body to eliminate them faster. If you're exercising heavily (CrossFit athlete's, take note) while transitioning to a ketogenic eating regime, you are vulnerable thanks to mineral loss through sweating, urinating, and physical stress from working out.

Probiotics (see below) can be an excellent addition to your diet but be careful with these supplements. For some people, probiotic products and supplements have the opposite effect of the intended one.

Are you digesting fat? You could have a gut that doesn't respond well to a 70% fat diet. The telltale signs are white blobs in your stool, yellow diarrhea, or light-colored, smelly poop.

Add bitter foods to your diet to improve digestion.

Bitter herbs like arugula (rucula), dandelion greens, kale, mustard greens, and watercress are easy salad greens to find. Dandelion coffee or tea is also supposed to [help indirectly with the digestion of fats](#).

The safest recourse is to take the following supplements:

- Sodium (salts)
- Magnesium
- Potassium

If you notice no improvements after a week, see a medical professional.

Keto Constipation

Now, this might come as a shock but low carb, high-fat diets are associated with reduced gut flora

diversity and a [decrease in beneficial bacteria](#).

The reduction in prebiotic fiber (undigestible plant fibers that feed the probiotics of the gut), and lack of fiber, in general (thanks to an overload of bacon in most cases) contribute to a constipated bowel.

The solution is simple. Eat more high-quality leafy green and cruciferous vegetables. You won't thrive on bacon and butter. Anyone that considers nothing but [bulletproof coffee](#) (delicious as it is), bacon, butter and coconut oil as a balanced diet needs to hit the nutrition books.

Examine your lifestyle and your stress levels. Beginner followers of the keto diet can find the restrictions and physiological changes stressful. When you're just starting out, working and exercising at the same level you did before changing to a low carb diet will put additional stress on your body. It takes most people time to adapt and the brain fog and lethargy that can impact your day can be stressful.

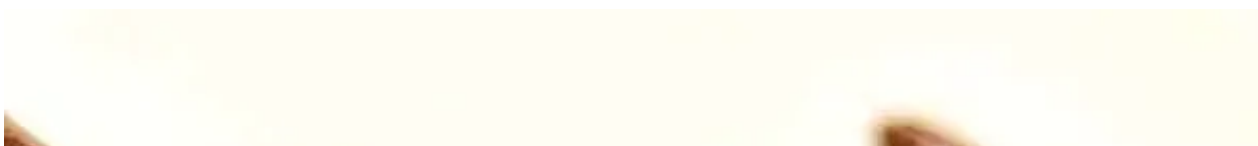
Stress causes digestive issues and constipation is one of the most common problems. Try to transition to a new diet when work demands are not high. Better still, begin eating low carb on vacation. Reduce the exercise workload for even a few weeks until your body has adapted to running on ketones and not sugar.

Keto Foods for Your Gut and Bowel Health

Healthy stools start in the gut. Eat well, have pleasant (yes, it should be pleasant and satisfying), efficient, and non-toxic-smelling poops.

To maximise your bowel health, consume the following:

- Bone Broth (made from grass-fed cow products)
- Fermented foods – Kombucha, Sauerkraut, and Kimchi are some of the best foods you can put in your body, whether you want to achieve ketosis or not. Go for raw, unpasteurised fermented products and try for small amounts at the start (with food) before indulging. Careful with Kombucha! Many people like to sweeten it or drink it before it's fermented. If you're drinking kombucha before the bacteria has consumed all the sugars, you'll be getting a sugar hit that might wreck your carb intake for the day.



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