

7 Cool Facts About Poop That Will Amaze You

by KAIA ROMAN Last Updated: Jun 14, 2017



Everybody poops, but not many people talk about it. So you might not know just how complex that seemingly basic biological function is. In fact, you can learn a lot about yourself just by paying attention to your poop.

1 CONSISTENCY MATTERS MORE THAN FREQUENCY.

Pooping every day isn't necessarily normal. A 1992 [study](#) found that less than half of the subjects pooped once a day, and young women were least likely to experience a daily poo. When it comes to poop, “normal” means on a regular schedule. This can be anywhere from a few times a day to a few times a week — as long as it isn't either too loose or too hard. Frequency is only a concern when it changes suddenly in either direction. Most of the time, [constipation](#) is due to an insufficient amount of fiber in the diet. While on the other side of the spectrum, [diarrhea](#) is usually caused by allergies, food intolerances or an underlying medical condition like Crohn's disease or irritable bowel syndrome.

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2 POOP SHOULD SMELL BAD, BUT NOT TOO BAD.

Your bowels are full of bacteria, and they produce some pretty stinky compounds. These bacteria are responsible for the same sulfurous odors that clear the room when grandpa farts, but they really aren't a problem. In fact, your guts rely on a beneficial balance of bacteria to stay healthy. However, if your poop smells really bad — like, “the bathroom has to be quarantined” bad — it could indicate a problem. Overwhelmingly stinky poop can be an indication of parasites or an underlying condition like [ulcerative colitis](#), [Crohn's disease](#) or celiac disease, especially if it accompanies other symptoms.



Berry salad

3 POOP IS BROWN FOR A REASON.

When bile (a green liquid that breaks down fats) travels from the liver through the intestinal tract, it creates a brown byproduct called stercobilin. That stercobilin isn't useful for the body, so it gets deposited in poop and promptly expelled. However, depending on what you've been eating, your poop can have a range of colors. For example, have you been munching on a large amount of leafy greens? Don't be surprised if you see something green in the can.

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breakfast cereal and other ingredients in a wooden box

4 POOP IS MOSTLY WATER.

Healthy poop is comprised of 75 percent water. The rest of it is mostly made up of bacteria — both dead and alive. It also contains fat, fiber, protein, food bits that couldn't be digested and mucus. The exact composition of your poop will depend on your diet. You've probably heard "eat your fiber." Well, there's a darn good reason for that. Fiber adds bulk to the high water content of your poop, giving it the proper consistency to move through your bowels to its final destination. According to [researchers](#) from Los Angeles Medical Center, most Americans eat only 10 to 15 grams of fiber a day, while doctors recommend 30 to 35 grams to prevent constipation.

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5 YOU PRODUCE YOUR BODY WEIGHT IN POOP EVERY SIX MONTHS.

A healthy pooper produces about one ounce of poop for every 12 ounces of body weight each day. That means an average male of 180 pounds will generate about one pound of poop per day, or 360 pounds of poop per year, and an average female of 140 pounds will generate about 280 pounds of poop per year. You really are full of poop!

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Fiber

6 POOP SHOULD SINK.

Check the toilet to see if you have any “floaters.” When your poop has a healthy density that's full of fiber, it should sink. When poop has a lower density than water, it floats. Floating poop can indicate problems in your diet or an underlying health condition. Floaters could be caused by high fat content, which might be a sign of malabsorption (when you don't properly absorb the nutrients from your food). Malabsorption is associated with celiac disease and other conditions. Floaters can also be caused by high gas content — gas that gets trapped inside the poop rather than coming out as flatulence. If you produce floaters on a regular basis, you should probably talk to a doctor about it.

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7 THE BACTERIA IN YOUR POOP CAN INFLUENCE YOUR STRESS LEVEL.

Our guts do much more than generate poop. They are home to a complex ecosystem of bacteria known as the microbiome. Increasingly, research studies are demonstrating a connection between the bacteria in your bowels and your level of stress. [Studies](#) have shown that beneficial bacteria in the gut affects both your emotional behavior and your outlook. They literally change the way you see and experience the world. In some [studies](#), harmful bacteria in the gut induced anxiety, while beneficial bacteria had a calming effect. On the flip side, stress and anxiety have been shown to throw off a healthy bacterial balance in the gut. Scientists still have more to learn, but one thing is clear: The connection between the bowels and the brain is undeniable.

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