Cleansing Strategy

It’s the most common gastrointestinal complaint in the United States, accounting for 2 million doctor visits a year. If you’re thinking diverticulosis, ulcers or even heartburn, forget it. Americans spend $725 million a year on laxatives to treat the little-studied condition of constipation. Dehydration is a common factor.

Many people assume they’re blocked up if they don’t have a bowel movement every day, although frequency has no bearing on the issue. But once afflicted with dry, hard stools—the actual symptoms of constipation—it’s important to rehydrate the body and get traffic moving quickly. Otherwise, experts advise, toxins may be reabsorbed by the system.

When this problem hits you, remember that there are herbal alternatives to bottled laxatives. Chief among them, and best known, is cascara; it’s extremely effective. Additionally, try these natural remedies: senna, rhubarb, black walnut, aloe, Oregon grape root, yellow dock root, valerian and slippery elm.

<10%

percentage of teenage girls in the United States who consume the amount of daily calcium necessary to build optimal bone density.

SOURCE: Council for Responsible Nutrition

Burning Question

**MYTH:** When you toast bread, you’re reducing the number of calories it contains.

**TRUTH:** Once toasted, bread has a lower water content. But it contains the exact same number of calories. If you want to cut your calories by more than half, try leaving off the yellow spread in the form of butter and definitely margarine.
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