



## CASE REPORT

# Chronic Constipation and Red Meat?

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### Abstract

A case of prolonged, chronic constipation was terminated by the simple removal of all forms of red meat from the individual's diet. The ease with which red meat can alter defecation time can be confirmed focuses on the striking overlap between the demography of constipation and colonic cancer. These two pieces of epidemiologic data have put into question the existence of a common genesis.

The word constipation delineates a medical condition with a limited differential diagnosis as to causation. Once those documentable causes of delayed fecal evacuation are eliminated, there remains a large number of cases for which there is no defined pathogenesis [1, 2]. Within industrialized nations, constipation is so common as to be accepted as a normal variant. The collective knowledge deficit as to causation is warehoused under such terms as chronic idiopathic constipation (CIC), irritable bowel syndrome with constipation (IBS-C) or fecal retention syndrome (FRS). The ability to pharmaceutically plicate the problem has left the embedded issues of causation unaddressed. The annual sales of non-prescription-laxatives, enemas, per oral fiber supplementation and suppositories constitute a one billion-dollar business.

In the United States, constipation is the most common gastrointestinal complaint [3]. In contrast to nations whose diet is primarily plant-based, constipation is an uncommon condition. An experiment in nature, personally noted, opens to speculation whether consumption of red meat may alert defecation dynamics. If so, that fact may contribute for the overlapping epidemiology of constipation and colonic cancer.

### Case Report:

XX came from a farming background in which red meat was a dietary staple. As a child she recalls receiving frequent enemas. By her mid-thirties, the interval between fecal evacuations had become between three to five days. Characteristically, a bowel movement was described as "trying to pass a large rock". The condition necessitated utilization of a host of over-the-counter compounds. At age 45, she was told to remove all sources of red meat from her diet. Within two weeks, her bowel movements became daily. Intestinal transition time became a day to a day and a half. Resumption of red meat consumption resulted in marked prolongation of the fecal transition time. White meats and fish had and has had no apparent adverse effect on the movement of digested food through her alimentary canal. For over two decades, she has been free of chronic constipation. What makes this case note-worthy are:

1. The successful red meat challenge,
2. The absence of a detectable effect on bowel function by white meats and
3. The documented period of long-term follow up.

### Discussion:

One robin doesn't make a spring. Similar counsel had been given to others resulting in a shortening of fecal evacuation-time. To demonstrate whether red meat can influence fecal evacuation, one has merely to take individuals on semi-vegetarian diets and have them go a on a red meat ketogenic diet. What XX and others

may represent are individuals whose genetic makeup predisposes their gastrointestinal smooth muscle or its innervation to over-respond to something in red meat. The possible relevance that red meat might alter gastrointestinal motility resides in the superimposition of two sets of epidemiologic data.

Within industrialized nations, constipation is so common as to be accepted as a normal variant. In nations whose diet is primarily plant-based, constipation is an uncommon condition. Colonic cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States, but it is rare in countries with primarily plant-based diets. No scientific evidence incriminates red meat as being the cause of colonic cancer; but what if red meat is not a cause, but a facilitator for the development of colorectal cancer? Large relatively soft stools have a significant moisture component. Hard stools are just that due to extensive water extraction. The net result is theoretically prolonged regional absorption of water-soluble compounds contained within fecal matter. What if prolonged fecal exposure concentrates in the colorectal area potential carcinogens already known to be embedded in the U.S. food supply? The striking overlap between the epidemiology of constipation and colonic cancer brings into question whether these two clinical entities share a common element [4, 5]. Chronic constipation is anything but a normal condition.

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