

- Atonic (non-functioning) colon which may also result from long-term use of stimulant laxatives
- Diverticular disease (chronic); diverticulitis (acute attacks)
- Faecal impaction
- Intestinal obstruction (or even perforation)
- Faecal incontinence : may have overflow diarrhoea
- Urinary incontinence
- Urinary tract infection especially with E. Coli, a normal gut bacterium
- Rectal bleeding
- Cramping lower abdominal and back pain
- Generalised weakness

Straining to defaecate causes

- An increase in intrathoracic (chest cavity) pressure which can lead to a reduction in coronary (heart), cerebral (brain) and peripheral circulation.
- development of hernias,
- worsening of symptoms of gastro-oesophageal reflux (GORD),
- transient ischaemic attacks (mini-strokes) and syncope (fainting) in patients with neurological disease
- Haemorrhoids may develop due to straining.

RISK OF CANCER

There has been an association between chronic constipation and cancer of the colon suggested in the literature; however, the evidence for this is not conclusive.

Recommending a high fibre, low-red meat diet and regular exercise in itself has been recognised in helping to reduce the risk of colon cancer as well as being beneficial in combating constipation.