

What Does Your Poop Say About You? (*written by: Carver B.A. PSY*)

The time we're born until the time we die, there are a few things that are inevitable. One of those things is the need to eat. Another one of those things, therefore, is the need to poop. Everything in this universe that has life is constantly in one stage of digestion or another, ultimately resulting in elimination and the need to refill the tank. As humans, we have concocted every way in the world to desensitize ourselves from our waste. Our overriding thought about it is that it's nasty and filthy. Everything about it is a turn off, and for good reason! Even as infants we cry and are distressed by the feel, smell, and sight of even our own poop. It was not until I began to change my lifestyle that I realized the value and information that poop really holds. As a sufferer of Crohn's disease, I began to take note of my daily eliminations at the advice of my doctor. Very early on in my journey with this autoimmune bowel disease, I understood the importance of noting any major changes in my stools. Sudden changes could have major medical implications even within the western medical model. It wasn't until I began to get into Ayurvedic medicine that I fully appreciated the informational treasure that poop really is. When taking responsibility for your own health, it's very important to analyze all aspects of your body's activities. In Ayurveda, elimination contains signs of the quality of digestion, the doshic activity, the condition of the Agni, and other important health indicators. All three doshas are present within the gut, the process of elimination, and the stool itself. Since Ayurveda teaches that everything in the material universe is some expression of our Doshas, Vata, Pitta, and Kapha, why should feces be any different? There are few better ways to snapshot your current state of imbalance, or vikruti, than to take a look before flushing. Since this practice involves regular perception of your waste, sometimes it helps to journal these observations. Once it becomes routine, journaling is not necessarily recommended unless one has a special need or health interest. Just simply making mental notes of what's going on is sufficient. Here are a few simple things to look for: Color, weight/floatation, formation, smell and stickiness. If the thought of paying this much attention to your poop grosses you out, you're not alone. But once you tap into the usage of this information and how to use it to better the next day's intake, routine, and digestion, you'll easily forget the nastiness of it all. In fact, the stronger and more balanced your digestion, or Agni, becomes, the less gross your poop becomes, too.

How to Assess Your Poop

Another very important and necessary component of the digestive process is what is called Purisha Agni. Purisha Agni's function is to absorb liquids and minerals, form the stool, and maintain temperature. As you may know, Agni is the digestive fire of all processes going on in the body. Color: There are several Agnis present in the body but in terms of elimination Purisha Agni is important because it gives color to the stool. Naturally the color of your stool would be one of the first things to notice. Here are a few things to look for color-wise: Pitta: Yellow, Vata: Darkness, Kapha: Paleness. By noticing the color of your waste on a regular basis, you can incorporate this information into your daily evaluations of your doshic balance. Since this is literally the waste product of the whole digestion process, one can get a pretty good indication of the job their system is doing. When one utilizes the tools of Ayurveda, you can use these observations proactively. Weight: In general, floating Kitta (sanskrit for 'poop') is good because toxicity shows itself as heaviness, and

would create a heavier, stickier stool. Heaviness depends on the quality of the food and the quality of digestion. Meat makes stools heavy, while a vegetarian diet provides lightness. Heaviness alone cannot determine full understanding since undigested fats, which are totally unhealthy, can also make poop float. Other signs: Obvious signs like redness, blackness, undigested food particles, and mucous should be noted and reported to your doctor when necessary. Other considerations like liquidity, constipation due to hardness or compactness, or exceptionally foul smells are indication of kapha and pitta imbalances.

How to Get Back to Balance

To affect regularity in your bowel movements, find a healthy routine, ensuring these key areas of your life have consistency: Exercise, meal routine, diet intake, amount of sleep and sleep patterns. If you begin paying attention to your poop and notice an imbalance, you might want to try a gentle cleanse. It's become common for my wife and I to frequently ask "how was your poop?" and it's one of the funniest questions to get used to hearing and responding to. I found, though, that the universal intelligence is all around and always expressing itself. So even something like poop is worth paying attention to. In the words of Deepak, "Elimination is the creative act that purifies the body.