

The Bristol Stool Scale



The Bristol Stool Scale is a clinical chart developed at the University of Bristol in 1997. It categorizes human stool into seven types based on shape and consistency — giving both patients and clinicians a simple, standardized way to describe bowel health without guesswork.

The seven types:

Type 1 — Separate hard lumps, like small stones. - *Severe constipation.*

Type 2 — Lumpy, sausage-shaped but hard. - *Mild constipation.*

Type 3 — Sausage-shaped with cracks on the surface. - *Normal, borderline.*

Type 4 — Smooth, soft, sausage or snake shape. - *The target. Ideal.*

Type 5 — Soft blobs with clear-cut edges. - *Lacking fiber, moving too fast.*

Type 6 — Fluffy, mushy pieces with ragged edges. - *Mild diarrhea.*

Type 7 — Entirely liquid, no solid pieces. - *Severe diarrhea.*

The clinical takeaway:

Types 1 and 2 — transit is too slow. Waste is sitting, water is being reabsorbed, and bacterial toxins are recycling back through the colon wall.

Types 6 and 7 — transit is too fast. Nutrients and water are being lost before absorption is complete.

Type 4 is the target every time. Consistent Type 4 means the route is running on schedule.