

## TikTok trend causes laxative shortage in USA

14th September 2023



A trend on TikTok has caused a shortage of laxative drugs in the USA. A laxative is a medicine for people who have constipation. This is the problem of people having difficulty going to the toilet because of hardened "poo". The medicine loosens the poo to

make it easier to go to the toilet. TikTok influencers are making teenagers believe that laxatives will help them lose weight. The videos have been viewed over one billion times on social media. Hundreds of thousands of youngsters are emptying drugstore shelves of laxatives. This means people who really need the medicine cannot get it. Doctors prescribe the drug for conditions like constipation, Crohn's disease and irritable bowel syndrome.

Doctors and people with stomach problems are worried about the new social media trend. Doctors say the online posts contain incorrect information, as laxatives do not lead to weight loss. People should only use them after talking to a doctor. This is because the drugs do not work for weight loss. They only lead to "water weight" being lost. Laxatives can also have side effects. These can include headaches, thirst, fatigue, dry skin, and dizziness. Any weight lost from taking laxatives is quickly put back on after having a drink. Doctors say it is healthier and more effective to lose weight through lifestyle changes. Eating more fruit and vegetables, and exercising are better than using laxatives.

Sources: [dailymail.co.uk](https://www.dailymail.co.uk) / [yahoo.com](https://www.yahoo.com) / [forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com)

### Writing

We should control our weight only through healthy eating and exercise. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

trend / TikTok / laxative / medicine / constipation / toilet / teenagers / weight loss / stomach problems / social media / doctors / side effects / headaches / thirst / exercise

### True / False

- 1) You can buy laxatives on TikTok. T / F
- 2) The article says constipation is when your poo is too soft. T / F
- 3) Laxative videos have been viewed over a billion times on TikTok. T / F
- 4) The article says doctors describe laxatives for constipation. T / F
- 5) Doctors say laxatives are one of the best things to lose weight. T / F
- 6) Laxatives only lead to the body losing water. T / F
- 7) One side effect of taking laxatives is dry skin. T / F
- 8) Doctors think eating fruit is better for losing weight. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                       |                |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| 1. <b>trend</b>       | a. illnesses   |
| 2. <b>medicine</b>    | b. think       |
| 3. <b>believe</b>     | c. working out |
| 4. <b>viewed</b>      | d. wrong       |
| 5. <b>conditions</b>  | e. fashion     |
| 6. <b>worried</b>     | f. looked at   |
| 7. <b>incorrect</b>   | g. successful  |
| 8. <b>fatigue</b>     | h. drug        |
| 9. <b>effective</b>   | i. concerned   |
| 10. <b>exercising</b> | j. tiredness   |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of TikTok?
- b) Have you ever had stomach problems?
- c) Which is worse – constipation or diarrhoea?
- d) How happy or unhappy are you with your weight?
- e) What do you think of social media influencers?
- f) Should laxative medicines only be available from doctors?
- g) What do you think of social media?
- h) What advice do you have for people who need the medicine?

## Phrase Match

- |                                        |                                 |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. A laxative is a medicine for people | a. and dizziness                |
| 2. The medicine loosens                | b. conditions like constipation |
| 3. TikTok influencers are making       | c. shelves of laxatives         |
| 4. emptying drugstore                  | d. weight loss                  |
| 5. Doctors prescribe the drug for      | e. the poo                      |
| 6. people with stomach                 | f. effects                      |
| 7. laxatives do not lead to            | g. changes                      |
| 8. Laxatives can also have side        | h. who have constipation        |
| 9. thirst, fatigue, dry skin,          | i. teenagers believe that       |
| 10. lifestyle                          | j. problems                     |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you think of social media trends?
- What's the best way to control your weight?
- What's the best thing to do for a headache?
- What's the best thing to do for fatigue?
- How easy is it to change your lifestyle?
- How can you eat better and exercise more?
- What questions would you like to ask TikTok influencers?

## Spelling

- The medicine eosolsn the poo
- TikTok cliunernefs
- Hundreds of thousands of nrgeyssout
- emptying drugstore vesehsl
- ncntisodoj like constipation
- irritable bowel snmroedy
- people with cmsatoh problems
- online posts contain notcricre information
- twiehg loss
- Laxatives can also have side cfsefte
- headaches, shritt, fatigue...
- feylstlej changes

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. b	4. f	5. a
6. i	7. d	8. j	9. g	10. c

## Role Play

### Role A – TikTok

You think TikTok is the best social media platform. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their platforms. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): X, Facebook or YouTube.

### Role B – X (formerly Twitter)

You think X is the best social media platform. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their platforms. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): TikTok, Facebook or YouTube.

### Role C – Facebook

You think Facebook is the best social media platform. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their platforms. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): X, TikTok or YouTube.

### Role D – YouTube

You think YouTube is the best social media platform. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their platforms. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): X, Facebook or TikTok.

## Speaking – Social Media

Rank these with your partner. Put the best social media platforms at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| • TikTok               | • LinkedIn  |
| • Instagram            | • Facebook  |
| • X (formerly Twitter) | • Pinterest |
| • YouTube              | • Threads   |

### Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	F	5	F	6	T	7	T	8	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.