



**Constipation**

The normal number of bowel movements (BMs) per day can vary. Some children poop every day while others poop once every few days. Infrequent stools are not a sign of constipation as long as stools are soft. By this age, your child should develop a regular BM pattern (i.e. you will know that your child usually poops once every two days).

**Is my child constipated?**

* Hard, dry, pellet-like stools
* Pain or crying during the passage of a BM
* Unable to pass a BM after straining/pushing for more than 10 minutes
* No BM after more than 3 days

**My child is constipated! What Can I Do?**

* Increase fruit juice (pear, apple, prune)
* Add fruits and veggies high in fiber content (peas, beans, broccoli, apricots, peaches, pears, figs, prunes, dates) 3 or more times per day
* Increase whole grain foods (bran flakes, bran muffins, graham crackers, oatmeal, brown rice, and whole wheat bread)
* Limit milk products (milk, ice cream, cheese, yogurt) to 3 servings per day
* Give child a warm bath to relax their muscles
* Establish a regular bowel pattern by sitting on the toilet for 10 minutes after meals, especially breakfast

**For Toilet-Training Toddlers:**

* Temporarily put your child back in diapers or pull-ups
* Reassure him that the poops won’t hurt when they come out
* Praise him for the release of stool
* Avoid any pressure, punishment or power struggles about holding back poops, sitting on the potty or resistance to training

**When to call the pediatrician?**

* You have tried the above suggestions with no relief
* Vomiting develops
* Your child is leaking stool
* Stool is black, white or blood-tinged
* Suppository or enema needed recently to relieve pain
* Constipation is a recurrent, chronic problem