

Constipation in Children



Paediatric & Neonatology Department

Constipation in children

How often should my child have a bowel movement?

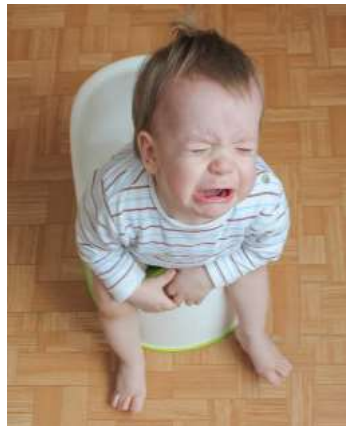
It depends on how old they are:

- In the first week of life, most babies have 4 or more bowel movements each day. They are soft or liquid.
- In the first 3 months, some babies have 2 or more bowel movements each day. Others have just 1 each week.
- By age 2, most kids have at least 1 bowel movement each day. They are soft but solid.
- Every child is different. Some have bowel movements after each meal. Others have bowel movements every other day.

How will I know if my child is constipated?

Your child might:

- Have fewer bowel movements than normal.
- Have bowel movements that are hard or bigger than normal.
- Feel pain when having a bowel movement.
- Arch their back and cry (if still a baby).
- Avoid going to the bathroom, do a "dance," or hide when they feel a bowel movement coming. This often happens when potty training and when starting school.
- Leak small amounts of bowel movement into the underwear (if they are toilet trained).



What if my child gets constipated?

In most children with mild or brief constipation, the problem usually gets better with some simple changes. Have your child:

- Eat more fruit, vegetables, cereal, and other foods with fiber.
- Drink some prune juice, apple juice, or pear juice.
- Drink at least 32 ounces of water and drinks that aren't milk each day (for children older than 2 years).
- Avoid milk, yogurt, cheese, and ice cream for a few days. Some children tend to get constipated if they eat a lot of dairy.
- Sit on the toilet for 5 or 10 minutes after meals, if they are toilet trained. Offer rewards just for sitting there.
- Stop potty training for a while, if you are working on it.



When should I take my child to the doctor or nurse?

You should have your child seen if:

- They are younger than 4 months old.
- They get constipated often.
- You have been trying the steps listed above for 24 hours, but your child has still not had a bowel movement.
- There is blood in the bowel movement or on the diaper or underwear.
- Your child is in serious pain.



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