

How to Care for Your Child with Constipation

This leaflet will provide you with information about Constipation causes, symptoms, treatment and home care advice.



What is Constipation?

Constipation occurs when a child has a hard poop and/or does not regularly go to the toilet. Constipation is a common problem in children.

- Most children with constipation do not have an identifiable underlying medical problem causing their symptoms.
- Infants who are breastfed have more bowel movements than those who are formula-fed.

What are the symptoms of Constipation?

Your child may:

- Have fewer bowel movements than usual (two or fewer per week).
- Have hard or bigger than average poop.
- Feel pain when having a bowel movement.
- Arch his or her back and cry (if still a baby).
- Avoid going to the bathroom.
- Have a small amount of blood when they poop due to straining and pushing to get the poop out.
- Leak small amounts of bowel movement into the underwear.

How is Constipation treated?

Constipation generally resolves with:

- Simple changes in diet or behaviour.
- Drinking enough fluids
- Regular toilet time
- Sometimes medicines may be required.

Home care advice:

1. Encourage your child to:

- Eat more fruit, vegetables, cereal, and other foods with fibre.
- Drink some prune juice, apple juice, or pear juice.
- Drink plenty of water (about 950 mls per day for children over two years old).
- Avoid milk, yoghurt, cheese, and ice cream during the constipation period.
Sit on the toilet for 5 or 10 minutes after meals if he or she is toilet trained.
Offer rewards just for sitting there.

2. Stop potty training for a while, if you are working on it.

When should I seek medical advice?

Seek medical advice if:

- Your child is younger than four months old.
- Your child has recurrent constipation.
- You have been trying the steps listed above for more than 24 hours, but your child has still not had a bowel movement.
- Your child Has a lot of blood when pooping or on the diaper or underwear.
- Your child is in severe pain.