



Constipation in Kids

Constipation is not just about how often your child has a poop, as this varies with age. Constipation can slowly expand your child's rectum, making it difficult for him/her to feel the need for a normal sized stool. Constipation leads to large irregular poops that are often painful and this can make the child hold in future stool which makes constipation worse. Liquid stool often leaks around the hard ones without the child feeling it, causing soiling.

Some important things to do:

1. Encourage high fiber foods such as whole grains, legumes, vegetables, and fruit.
 - Give whole grain cereals such as oatmeal, mini wheat biscuits or bran flakes/buds.
 - Use 100% whole grain breads and crackers. Make sure "whole grain" is the first ingredient in the ingredient list on the package.
 - Serve more legumes (beans, peas and lentils) instead of meat more often. You could also try half the amount of meat you would normally use and add legumes to make up that difference. E.g. mix a rinsed can of lentils in with ground beef in pasta sauce.
 - Offer vegetables and/or fruit at every meal and snack. Serve vegetables and fruits with their skins whenever possible. Try hummus as a dip.
 - Use whole grain whole wheat flour, oatmeal, oat bran, or bean flour in pancake, muffin and cookie recipes.
 - Try this "Constipation Fighter": Mix 2 cups All Bran Original cereal, 1 cup unsweetened applesauce, and ½ cup prune juice together. Let sit for 10 minutes and mix again. Keep in refrigerator in sealed container for up to 2 weeks. Start with 1 tbsp a day and increase to 2 tbsp a day.
 - Inulin, ground flax, and psyllium are soluble fibres which can be baked into cookies or added to the child's diet. They help to regulate the consistency of the poop and can be used for both diarrhea and constipation. A number of recipes that use these products can be found on the Kids Tummies website:
https://www.kidstummies.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Psyllium_Recipees_new.pdf
2. Drink plenty of water.
3. Start a toilet routine: have your child sit on the toilet 5-10 minutes after every meal. Make sure the toilet or potty is comfortable and the child has a stool so their legs are not dangling.
4. Give positive rewards for sitting on toilet or having a poop on the toilet. I.e. Stickers, small toys.
5. Keep a stool diary or track stools on a calendar.
6. Avoid punishments for soiling underwear.

Your doctor or nurse practitioner might recommend a treatment called PEG3350 (Restorolax, Lax-a-day, Sea-Lax) to help. This is what is called an osmotic laxative and it cannot be absorbed by the body, it comes out with the poop. Its job is to keep water in the stool and if properly prepared, it is flavourless and can be mixed in with any drink. The best way to take PEG is to mix it in with a drink your child likes. It can be easily disguised in milk or chocolate milk. PEG is often taken for at least 2-3 months because if stopped earlier, the constipation is likely to come back immediately. Once your child has been having regular daily bowel movements that do not cause pain for 1 month, you can slowly wean from the medication by giving every two days, then every three days, etc.