

Helping Your Child with Constipation

Signs Your Child is Constipated

- Hard, dry, or infrequent stools.
- Pain or straining with bowel movements.
- Holding behaviors—hiding, dancing, or avoiding the toilet.
- Abdominal pain, bloating, or soiling (encopresis).

Dietary Recommendations

1. **Increase Fiber**
 - Encourage **fruits with pits** (peaches, plums, apricots, cherries).
 - Add **flaxseeds, chia seeds, and whole grains** to meals.
 - Include **vegetables like broccoli, carrots, and peas**.
2. **Hydration is Key**
 - Water intake should match their age and activity level.
 - **Prune or pear juice:** 2-4 oz per day can help.
3. **Limit Constipating Foods**
 - Reduce **dairy intake** (milk, cheese, yogurt) if it worsens constipation.
 - Avoid excessive processed foods and white bread.

Encouraging Healthy Bowel Habits

- **Routine toilet sitting:** Encourage sitting on the toilet **after meals** for 5-10 minutes.
- **Use a footstool:** Knees should be higher than hips (Squatty Potty position).
- **Make it fun:** Blow bubbles, sing songs, or read a book while sitting.

Treatment Options

- **Mild constipation:** Dietary changes and hydration are usually enough.
- **Severe constipation:** A short course of **polyethylene glycol (Miralax)** may be needed.
- **Chronic constipation:** May require long-term stool softeners under a doctor's guidance.

When to Seek Medical Advice

- No bowel movement for **7-10 days despite changes**.
- Persistent **encopresis (stool leakage)**.
- Severe abdominal pain, vomiting, or blood in stool.
- If constipation is recurrent or causing distress.

For more information, search the podcast **“Your Child Is Normal Episode 68: Constipation! Everything you need to know”**.