



Constipation

Not all children have a bowel movement every day. If your child has a bowel movement every few days, and it is not very hard and does not hurt, your child is normal. Breast-fed babies may often go several days (up to one week) between normal bowel movements. Small babies often strain when they have a normal bowel movement and this is not a reason to worry.

Constipation is when your child has a change in bowel movement pattern associated with hard stools, blood in the stool, pain with bowel movements or difficulty passing it. Children often become temporarily constipated with a change in routine (eg. traveling or moving) or when they have a minor illness. This kind of occasional constipation usually goes away without treatment. Most constipation can be treated simply by **increasing the amount of water, fiber and natural sugars** in the diet such as:

Fresh fruits: applesauce, apple with peel, blackberries, dates, figs, grapefruit, grapes, mangos, nectarines, oranges, pears, prunes, raspberries, tangerines.

Fresh vegetables: baked potato with skin, beets, Brussel sprouts, cabbage, broccoli, carrots, celery, corn, green beans, spinach, sweet peas.

Whole grain cereals: all-bran, bran flakes, corn bran, oatmeal, raisin bran, shredded wheat.

Whole grain breads: rye wafers, whole wheat crackers, whole wheat bread, bran muffins.

Meat substitutes: cooked beans (black, pinto, baked, kidney, lima, lentil, garbanzo).

Foods that are *low in fiber* and should be avoided or consumed in moderation are: white rice, white bread, saltines, milk and milk products (cheese, butter, yogurt) and some cereals (rice krispies, grits, cream of wheat, cream of rice).

Here are some age specific suggestions to increase the fiber and natural sugar in your child's diet if your child is constipated:

Less than 3 months old: add 1 teaspoonful of Light Karo Corn Syrup to one or two 4 ounce bottles of formula or pumped breast milk per day.

Over 3 months old: offer 3-6 ounces of prune or white grape juice each day with extra water, and encourage fruits and vegetables if your child has begun taking baby food.

Toddler and older child: offer prune or white grape juice, extra water and select high fiber foods from the list above.

If your child is still constipated after 2 weeks with these changes in diet, please consult with your physician.