

# Constipation

In children aged 1-5

## What is normal?

- Bowel patterns can be very different for each child. Some children have 1 or 2 bowel movements a day. Others can go 2 to 3 days or longer between bowel movements. Both of these can be normal.
- Your child's stools should be soft and easy to pass.



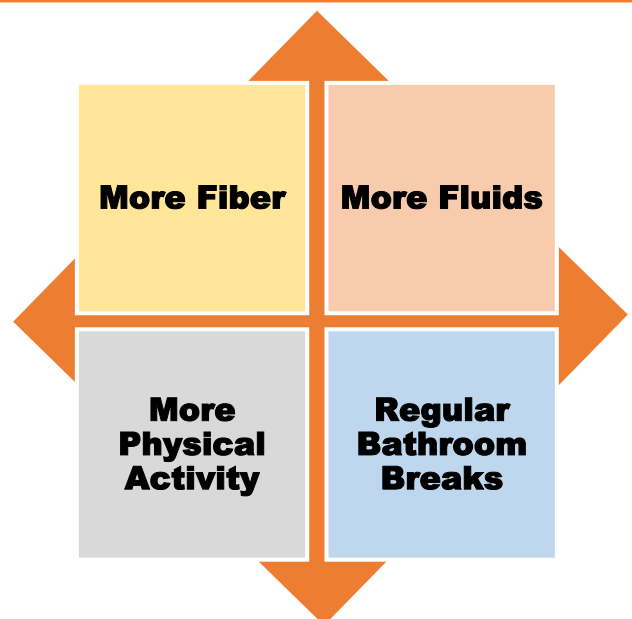
## Is your child constipated?

- Has he or she gone many days without normal bowel movements?
- Is he or she having stomach pain or cramping?
- Is he or she having hard or dry stools?
- Is it difficult or painful for your child to have a bowel movement?
- Is there blood in your child's stools?



If you are answering yes to some of these questions, your child may be constipated. Check with their doctor to make sure that the problem is constipation and not something else.

## How to help your child with constipation.



If you have tried these tips and you still think your child is suffering from constipation, call your child's doctor. Do not give laxatives, suppositories, or mineral oil to your child without your doctor's advice.

## More Fiber

**Slowly** increasing foods, high in fiber, can help to prevent or treat constipation. Fiber is a part of our food that we can't digest—it makes our stools softer.

### Foods High in Fiber



#### Fruits

Children aged 1 to 3 need around 1 cup of fruit every day. Children aged 4 to 5 need around 1.5 cups of fruit.

Some ideas could be apples, strawberries, pears, oranges, or prunes.



#### Vegetables

Children aged 1 to 3 need around 1 cup of vegetables every day. Children aged 4 to 5 need around 1.5 cups of vegetables. Some ideas could be lentils, beans, broccoli, or carrots.



#### Whole Grains

Whole grain breads, cereals, pastas, and brown rice can be a good source of fiber. Make half of your child's grains whole. Look for "Whole grain" as the first ingredient on the ingredients list.



Add 1 to 3 tablespoons per day of 100% bran cereal, or 1 to 2 tablespoons of finely chopped dried fruits like raisins or dried apples to cereal or yogurt.

## More Fluids

Give your child plenty of liquids, especially water, every day.

You can also give your child prune, apple, or pear juice. Remember portion sizes for juice are small. It is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics to limit fruit juice to 4 ounces a day for children aged 1 to 3 and 4 to 6 ounces for children aged 4 to 6.



## More Physical Activity

Constipation can be caused by not being active enough. Help your child to be active while they play. Limit screen time to 2 hours or less each day. Some fun ideas could be to take a family walk, play music and dance, or play with a ball.



## Regular Bathroom Breaks

Withholding stools can be another cause of constipation. Your child may be avoiding going to the bathroom because it is painful or he or she doesn't want to take a break from playing. Help your child go to the bathroom regularly. Set aside a quiet time for using the toilet. After every meal, may be an easy way to remember. Encourage your child when he or she needs to go. Do not rush your child.



**Warning: Children under age 4 can choke on nuts, popcorn, fruit skins, and raw vegetables. Cook all vegetables for young children.**