

## Constipation: Brief Version

### What is constipation?

When your child is constipated, your child may:

- Have a hard time having a stool.
- Have a painful stool.
- Go 3 or more days without a stool.

This could happen because your child:

- Does not eat enough fiber.
- Drinks or eats too many milk products.
- Does not drink enough liquid.
- Does not get enough exercise.
- Remembers painful stools. That can make some children hold back.

### How can I take care of my child?

**For babies less than 1 year old.**

- If your baby is over 2 months old, give fruit juices (such as apple or pear juice) twice a day.
- If your baby is over 4 months old, you can add strained, high-fiber baby foods twice a day. Cereals, apricots, prunes, peaches, pears, bananas, apples, beans, or peas are good fiber foods.

**For children over 1 year old.**

- Feed your child fruits or vegetables at least 3 times a day.
- Give more foods rich in bran and fiber. Try bran flakes, bran muffins, shredded wheat, graham crackers, oatmeal, brown rice, or whole wheat bread.
- Decrease the amount of milk products (such as cow's milk, ice cream, cheese, and yogurt) to 3 servings per day.

**For children who are toilet trained.**

- Have your child sit on the toilet for 10 minutes after meals. This will help your child have a stool every day.

If a change in diet does not solve the problem, you can give a stool softener such as Metamucil or Citrucel. Do not use a suppository or enema unless your doctor tells you to do so.

### Call your child's doctor right away if:

- Your child starts to have very bad rectal or stomach pain.

### Call your child's doctor during office hours if:

- Your child has not had a stool after you have fed your child fiber foods and reduced milk products for 3 days.
- You are using suppositories or enemas for your child.
- You have other concerns or questions.

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