
Managing Constipation in Babies (0-12 months)

Normal Bowel Movements

Bowel movements (also called poop) and how often they happen can be very different from one baby to another. What is normal for your baby depends on his age and what he eats and drinks.

Babies 0-6 months

- | Breastfed babies will usually have soft, yellow stools.
- | Formula-fed babies can have yellow, green or brown stools. His stools can be mushy, pasty, soft or firm.
- | Your baby may have one or more bowel movements a day. Some breastfed babies may not have a bowel movement for several days or longer.

Babies 6 – 12 months

When there is a change in what your baby eats, you will see a change in his stool. For example, when he starts solid foods, his stool will become brown and firmer. It is normal for his stools to be all shades of brown, and even green.

As your baby gets older, he may not have bowel movements as often.

Is My Baby Constipated?

Signs of constipation in your baby are:

- | hard, large stools
- | pain when passing stool
- | having fewer than 2 stools per week. Having fewer bowel movements than normal does not always mean he is constipated. As long as his stools are soft and pain free, he is not constipated. It is very rare for a breastfed baby under 6 months old to be constipated.

If your baby shows these signs of constipation take him to see his health care provider. As well, if your baby strains and cries for 10 minutes and his face turns red or purple while having a bowel movement, talk to

a health care provider. Your health care provider can help you find the best treatment plan for your baby.



Steps you can take

For Babies 0 - 6 months:

There are no special dietary guidelines for constipation for babies less than 6 months old. Wait until your baby is 6 months old before you give solid foods.

- i Feed your baby breastmilk or formula whenever he seems hungry. If your baby is growing well and has at least 5 wet diapers per day, he is getting enough.
- i If you give your baby formula make sure that you prepare it with the right amount of water. Offer iron fortified formula. Iron-fortified formula does not cause constipation. Changing formulas does not usually relieve constipation in babies.

For babies 6 to 12 months old:

- i Offer your baby a variety of healthy foods that are the right type and texture for his age. Foods should be easy to chew and swallow.
- i Offer iron rich foods every day such as pureed, ground or minced meats, poultry, fish, lentils, beans and iron enriched infant cereals.
- i As part of a varied diet, offer your baby foods such as whole grains, legumes (beans, peas, lentils), vegetables and fruits. Try some of the following foods when your baby is ready for them:
 - i Give whole grain infant cereals such as oatmeal, barley or brown rice cereal.
 - n Note that bran should not be given to children under the age of two years as it can change how some nutrients get absorbed.
 - i Add pureed, minced or pieces of soft fruits or vegetables to infant cereals. Leave skin on fruits like pears and apples when making purees.
 - i Offer cooked and mashed beans, peas and lentils more often as an alternative to meat.

- i When your baby is ready for finger foods, try soft cubed or diced vegetables and fruits, strips of whole grain toast and whole grain crackers.
- i Meal and snack ideas:
 - n bean or lentil stews or dahl
 - n whole grain infant cereal with mashed bananas and pureed prunes
 - n minced meat with green peas and sweet potatoes
 - n pears and yogurt
 - n pureed squash and brown rice.
- i Water should be offered in addition to breastmilk or formula. Continue to breastfeed for as long as you can.
- i Prunes are commonly given to help constipation. Start with a small amount (15 ml or 1 tablespoon) and increase slowly. You can add pureed or minced prunes to infant cereal, yogurt or minced meats.

Special considerations

Do not give your baby fibre supplements. Children should get fibre from food sources only.

Distributed by: