



Coping with Constipation

Passing a bowel movement, or pooping, is something we all do, but for many kids, this can be a struggle. When children have trouble passing a bowel movement (or BM), we say they are constipated. Constipation can make your child's tummy hurt, which can cause them to eat less. If constipation is not treated, it can sometimes affect a child's growth. If your child often has trouble or pain with their BMs, contact your healthcare provider.

Your child might be constipated if they:

- Have hard, dry stools
- Go days without pooping
- Have pain when going to bathroom
- Often have marks in their underpants from poop

Reasons your child may be constipated:

- Not drinking enough fluid
- Not getting enough exercise
- Stress
- Medications
- Weak stomach muscles
- Not eating enough fiber

Ways to help your child's constipation:

- Increase the amount of fluid your child drinks. A child should take about 1½ ounces of fluid per pound of body weight. For example a 20 pound child needs about 30 ounces of fluid.
 - Offer your child water throughout the day
 - Your child can also have up to 4 ounces of juice and 24 ounces of milk per day
 - Foods that turn to liquid at room temperature count as liquids including popsicles, jello, soup, and frozen yogurt
 - Children need more fluids when the weather is hot, if they have a fever, or if they drool a lot
- Help your child be more active
 - Encourage them to walk, run, play, and move positions often during the day
 - For children who have trouble walking, help them change positions and move their legs throughout the day
- Try to set a bathroom routine
 - Get your child into the habit of sitting on the toilet for a few minutes at set times throughout the day
 - Many parents/caregivers find it helpful to do this shortly after meal or snack time.
 - Setting a bathroom routine reminds your child to pass their BM. Many children are so busy they often hold it in!
- Review your child's medications and supplements
 - Ask your child's healthcare provider if any of their medications might cause constipation
- Talk to your child's health care provider about over-the-counter medications your child could take. They might also be able to teach you massages and stretches you can do with your child to help move the BM through their body.
- Some foods can also help your child handle constipation. For more information and ideas, see the back of this handout.





Coping with Constipation

Helping your child with constipation through food

Fiber helps food move through the body and keeps your insides clean. All fruits, vegetables and whole grains are good sources of fiber. Your child needs at least 5 plus their age in grams of fiber each day. For example, a 7 year old child needs at least 12 grams of fiber each day (7 years + 5 = 12).

If your child is not used to eating much fiber, start slowly and work up to the recommended amount for your child's age. Be sure to offer plenty of drinks. Increased fiber without increased fluid can cause gas and stomach aches.

What about Juice?

Try adding 2-4 ounces of prune or pear juice to your' child's diet each day to help with constipation. Prunes and pear contain a special type of sugar that helps BMs softer and easier to pass.

Food Group	Food	Grams of Fiber
Fruits	Raisins (2 Tbsp)	0.75 grams
	Strawberries (1/2 cup)	1.5 grams
	Applesauce or Pears (1/2 cup)	2 grams
	Avocado (1/2 cup)	2.5 grams
Veggies	Corn (1/2 cup)	1.5 grams
	Beans (1/2 cup)	7 grams
Whole Grains	Wheat bran (1 Tbsp)	1.5 grams
	Whole wheat bread (1 slice)	2 grams
	Brown rice (1/2 cup)	2 grams
	Ground flax seed (1 Tbsp)	2 grams
	Oatmeal (1 packet)	3 grams
	Whole wheat pasta or Quinoa (1/2 cup)	3 grams

Too Easy Trail Mix

- 2 Tbsp raisins
- 2 Tbsp dark chocolate chips
- 2 Tbsp peanuts
- 10 pretzel sticks

Mix together and enjoy!

Serving size: 1/2 cup, 200 calories, 2.75 grams fiber

Quick N Tasty Burrito

- 8 inch whole wheat tortilla
- cup low-fat refried beans
- 2 Tbsp low-fat shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 Tbsp salsa
- 1 Tbsp of wheat bran

Spread refried beans on half of tortilla and sprinkle with cheese. Microwave for 30 seconds. Top with wheat bran and salsa.

Serving size: 1 burrito, 250 calories, 10 grams fiber

Power Pudding

- 1/2 cup prune juice
- 1/2 cup applesauce
- 1/2 cup wheat bran flakes cereal
- 1/2 cup whipped topping
- 1/2 cup prunes (canned or stewed)

Blend all ingredients, cover, and refrigerate up to one week.

Serving size: 1/4 cup, 41 calories, 1 gram fiber