



Does my baby have constipation?

Constipation is the passing of hard, dry and sometimes painful stools.



Look for these signs...

- A newborn who has firm stools less than once a day.
- Stools that are hard and dry, following a painful bowel movement. However, keep in mind that straining is not uncommon during bowel movements and doesn't mean the baby is in pain.
- Blood in (or on) the stool.
- Stomach pain that gets better after having a large bowel movement.
- Soiling between bowel movements. Soiling looks like diarrhea in the baby's diaper. It is liquid that has leaked around a large, solid stool.

Keep in mind...

- For an older baby, having stools every 3 to 4 days is normal as long as they are not hard, dry and painful.
- Having soft stools means the baby **does not** have constipation.
- The color of the stool has nothing to do with constipation.
- Babies who are fed only breastmilk are rarely constipated.
- Constipation occurs as often in babies fed low-iron formula as in babies fed iron-fortified formula.



Adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics
Algorithm for Evaluation and Treatment of Constipation

For more information or for alternate format requests, call (971) 673-0040.

WIC is an equal opportunity program and employer.

For civil rights issues and questions, please call 1-888-271-5983.

Constipation: What you can do! *

- X **Do not** add extra water to the formula.
- X **Do not** reduce the amount of breastfeeding or formula you give the baby.
- X **Do not** use honey or corn syrup with babies due to the risk of botulism.

If your baby is 0 - 6 months and not eating solid food...

If your baby is breastfeeding, try to **breastfeed more often**. If your baby gets breastmilk and formula, give the baby **more breastmilk** and less formula. Always feed your baby breastmilk or formula before giving water or juice.

Try this:

1. Increase baby's movement (play, rock, move legs or massage the baby).
2. Offer your baby 1 to 3 ounces of plain water each day, **OR** mix 2-3 ounces of water and 1 ounce of apple, pear or prune juice and use in one day.

If your baby is older than 4 months and eating solid food...

Try this:

1. Increase baby's movement (allow the baby plenty of floor time for play, rock, move legs, or gently massage the baby).
2. Add extra fluid to the diet (breastfeed more often or offer 2 to 4 ounces of plain water each day), **OR** mix 2-3 ounces of water and 1 ounce of apple, pear or prune juice and use in one day.
3. For older infants (8 - 12 months), give more fruits and vegetables.

Babies under 4 months old should not eat solids. Solid food may cause constipation in young babies.



**If after 3 to 5 days your baby is still constipated,
call your baby's health care provider.**

* This information is for full term infants. If your baby was premature, contact your baby's health care provider.