

CONSTIPATION IN TODDLERS GUIDANCE & TIPS FOR PARENTS



- If you think your child is constipated, do not be afraid to seek help - sooner is better than later.
- Constipation can show itself in different ways, the toddler:
 - having no bowel movement for three or more days
 - passing lots of small hard stools
 - holding on to stools:
 - appearing to be pushing with signs such as face becoming red, when in fact holding on to stools
 - using avoidance techniques such as dancing about or hiding
 - soiling - loose stools that leak into pants, pyjamas and bedclothes. This happens when the bowel is full.
- Make sure your toddler is drinking enough fluid - six to eight drinks a day. Always give a drink with each meal and at least one in between meals or with a snack. Your toddler may need more fluid in hot weather and if he or she is taking a laxative.
- Water is the best drink between meals. You can give water or diluted fruit juices with meals. Limit milk to three small drinks per day - about 120mls or 4oz.
- Try to eat together as a family. Give your toddler small regular meals and snacks. Serve a variety of foods and concentrate on quality rather than quantity. Persevere with fruits, vegetables and cereals.
- Encourage your toddler to be physically active, to play outside, swim, walk, and join in team games.
- A consistent routine will help your toddler develop regular toilet habits. For example, sitting on the potty or toilet for a few minutes after meals. Hand washing afterwards can be fun!
- Listen and watch for signs that your toddler is ready to begin potty/toilet training. Take your time, don't rush it.
 - Give praise and positive encouragement. Minimise fuss over 'accidents'
 - Make sure your toddler can sit on the toilet, supported (using a child seat or foot stool for example) so that he or she feels safe.
- If these measures do not work your healthcare professional may suggest seeking medical advice.



Practical help and information
on nutrition and development

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