

Questions?

Call
(206) 598-3030

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

To talk to a nurse, call:
(206) 598-3030

To make an appointment, call:
(206) 598-3000

Other Helpful Tips

- For the child over three years of age, add trail mix or granola as a topping for ice cream, sherbet or frozen yogurt.
- Use whole grain bread for French toast. Dip the bread into beaten egg and then coat with crushed bran cereal.
- Increase your child's activity—plan an exercise program for you and your child.

Patient Education

Pediatric Care Center



Constipation

How to deal with constipation in the child over one year of age

Children over one year of age can have bowel movements from once every other day to three times a day. Constipation occurs when a child goes for more than three days without a bowel movement or when their daily bowel movement becomes very hard or large in size. Either way, your child will likely have pain or need to strain when having a bowel movement.

For these reasons, your child may resist the urge to have a bowel movement at all. When this occurs the stool builds up in the intestine and the passage of the stool becomes even more painful. The tips given here will help you deal with your child's simple constipation before it becomes a chronic problem.



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Fiber

functions to help the large intestine absorb water into the stool and produce gas. Fiber and water help to increase the amount of stool in the intestine and increase the urge for a child to have a bowel movement.

Diet Tips to Manage Constipation

Increase Fiber—To figure out how much fiber your child needs use the formula:

$$\text{Age in years} + 5.$$

Good sources of fiber include:

- Whole grain bread, rye krisp, bran crackers
- Cereals—(**Look for cereals with 5 or more grams of fiber per serving**) such as oatmeal, cooked whole wheat cereal, *Cheerios*, *Shredded Wheat*, *Bran Chex* or *Wheat Chex*, *Raisin Bran*, *Frosted Miniwheats* and *Grape Nuts*
- Bran flakes or *All Bran* cereal—add 1-2 teaspoons to foods such as applesauce, soups, cereals, yogurt, burgers, casseroles, chili, spaghetti sauce, and meat loaf
- Rice, lentils, refried beans, pinto beans
- Snacks of *Frosted Miniwheats*, *Bran Chex* or *Wheat Chex*, *Raisin Squares* cereal with dried fruits or nuts (**No nuts for child under three**)

Increase fruits—Most dried fruits are high in fiber and fresh fruits are high in fluid content. Fruits that are good sources of fiber include:

- Dried fruits—prunes, figs, dates, raisins
- Fresh fruits—peaches, pears, apricots

Increase vegetables—Vegetables are a great source of fiber. Sometimes children will more readily eat them if they are steamed lightly to make them fork tender and then served with a marinade or dip which they can dip into. It is also sometimes helpful to invite friends over and have a “dipping” party. Vegetables high in fiber include:

- Broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower
- Lima beans, green beans, celery, and peas
- Baked potatoes, corn

Increase fluids—Children need 6-10 cups of fluid per day depending on age and weight. For example, a 22 pound child needs 5 cups and a 60 pound child needs 9 cups. Ways to increase fluids include:

- Add 8 ounces **water** mid-morning and mid-afternoon
- Give cup of hot water in morning to stimulate bowel movement
- Increase foods high in water content such as yogurt, oranges, apples, grapes, watermelon, juices, Jell-O, creamed soups made with skim milk

Reduce dairy intake—For some children large amounts of dairy products may cause constipation. To prevent this, these tips may help:

- Limit milk intake to 16-32 ounces per day
- Reduce cheese intake
- Limit ice cream and yogurt