

Constipation

Symptoms of constipation in children include: pain while having a bowel movement; unable to pass a bowel movement without straining or pushing for more than ten minutes; no bowel movement for more than 3 days; abdominal pain; nausea; traces of liquid or clay-like stool in your child's underwear (a sign that stool is backed up in the rectum). Constipation can be caused by withholding (child may refuse to go when she needs to); changes in diet; changes in routine; certain medications; cow's milk allergy; family history; or medical conditions. Children who are sedentary and do not eat enough fiber are at risk for constipation.

Most constipation can be treated at home with diet changes. Constipation is usually caused by recent changes in diet or waiting too long to use the bathroom. Increase fruit juice (not citrus). Add fruits and vegetables high in fiber 3 times per day (peas, beans, broccoli, bananas, apricots, peaches, pears, figs, prunes, dates). Increase whole grain foods (bran flakes, bran muffins, graham crackers, oatmeal, brown rice and whole wheat bread). Decrease milk products (milk, ice cream, cheese, yogurt).

WHEN TO CALL:

- If your child has severe stomach pain or severe rectal pain
- If your child has constipation plus vomiting
- If your child has signs of dehydration
- If you child continues to have no bowel movements for more than three days after changing to a high fiber diet



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