

## Constipation

Constipation means your child's stools are hard and dry. This makes having a bowel more difficult than normal. Constipation may be caused by lack of exercise, low water intake, stress, recent illness, changes in your child's daily routine or a low fiber intake. It may also be caused by medicine your child is taking.

### How is constipation treated?

There are many ways to treat this problem. Your doctor or nurse will talk with you about the treatments listed below. They will prescribe one or more for your child.

1. Have your child get more exercise each day.
2. Have your child drink more water every day (does not apply to infants).
3. Limit foods low in fiber that may increase the risk for constipation. These foods include:
  - Milk. No more than 16 to 20 ounces a day. Limit other dairy foods like cheese and ice cream.
  - Foods or snacks made from white sugar and white flour such as cookies, cake and white bread.
  - Sugar-coated cereals
  - Unripe bananas
  - Candy including chocolate
  - Deep-fried foods

4. After each meal, have your child sit on the toilet for five minutes. A timer may be helpful. If your child's feet do not reach the floor, provide a stool to help make sitting more comfortable. This time should be made as pleasant as possible. Do not punish or threaten your child if a bowel movement does not happen.



5. Give your child foods that are high in fiber. Examples of high fiber foods include:

	Highest in Fiber	Other good choices
<b>Breads and crackers</b>	100% whole wheat, cracked wheat or bran bread and muffins	Graham crackers Any whole grain or rye crackers
<b>Cereals</b>	All Bran <sup>®</sup> or Raisin Bran <sup>®</sup> Bran Buds <sup>®</sup> Shredded Wheat <sup>®</sup> Corn Bran	Wheat germ Oatmeal or granola Bran flakes Any whole wheat cereal
<b>Vegetables</b>	Raw is best, but be sure to grate or grind raw vegetables as choking may be a danger if not chewed well.	
	Corn (cream or whole kernel) Brussel sprouts Green beans	Celery Carrots Squash (with outer skin if zucchini)

**Examples of high fiber foods (continued)**

<b>Vegetables (cont)</b>	<b>Highest in Fiber</b>	<b>Other good choices</b>
	Cauliflower Baked potato with skin Green peas	Sweet potato
	Spinach or broccoli (raw, fresh cooked or frozen)	
<b>Fruits</b>	Any fresh fruit is good. The outer skin of fruits like apples and pears contain fiber. Remove the skin to prevent choking if your child is unable to chew it easily.	
	Apples Pears Oranges Raspberries	Pineapple Raisins Nectarines Cranberries
	Figs, prunes (dried or stewed) or other dried fruits	
	Ripe bananas Strawberries	
<b>Nuts and seeds</b>	Popcorn (popcorn should not be given to young children because of choking dangers)	
	Chunky peanut butter	
	All nuts (chop or grind the nuts as choking may be a danger if not chewed well)	
<b>Beans and peas</b>	Black-eyed or split peas Baked beans	Black beans Garbanzo beans
	Pinto or lima beans	
	Kidney or white beans	
	Lentils	

Your child's health care provider may recommend other treatments. **Do not use any of these treatments unless your child's health care provider tells you it is okay:**

- Laxative.
- Enema.
- Stool softener.
- Suppository.

6. Make an appointment in one week to see your child's health care provider to check on your child's progress.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child:

- Has no bowel movement in 3 days.
- Starts to vomit.
- Has constipation that is getting worse.
- Has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.**