



CONSTIPATION IN BABIES

WHAT IS NORMAL?

Constipation in babies isn't common, but it isn't unheard of. It can be hard work for babies to have a bowel movement and this shows! Straining, crying, or getting red in the face can all be normal.

- **Breastfed babies** have stools that are yellow and runny. Typically, they are the consistency of cottage cheese.
- **Formula fed babies** have stools that are tan or yellow and pasty. Typically, they are the consistency of peanut butter.

First few days

Babies stools change color and texture in the first few days of life. At first their stools will be black, thick, and sticky. They may only have one stool on the first day. By day 3 their stools may be green, and they may be having 2-3 stools a day.

First month

- **Breastfed babies** often have a stool after every feeding during the first month of life.
- **Formula fed babies** may have a stool around 4-5 times a day in the first week. When they are 2-4 weeks old, they may have a stool around twice a day.

Older than 1 month

Babies usually have stools less often after their first month.

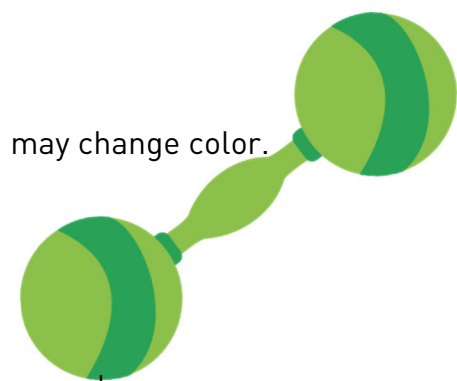
- Older **breastfed babies** may go several days or even a week between bowel movements.
- **Formula fed babies** may have a bowel movement at least every day but may go 2-3 days between bowel movements.

Older than 6 months

When babies start solid foods, their stools often become a little firmer and may change color.

IS YOUR BABY CONSTIPATED?

Signs to look for:

- More fussy than usual
 - Spitting up more than usual
 - Unusually hard and dry stools
 - Fewer bowel movements than normal
 - Stools with blood or with a loose and watery texture
 - Straining for more than 10 minutes without success
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WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Consider breastfeeding your baby.
- Make sure formula is mixed correctly. Check the instructions on the can.
- Help baby move more. Increase activity by moving your baby's legs in a bicycle motion.
- Put a warm washcloth on your baby's stomach.
- Talk to your baby's doctor.

Babies under 6 months old

- Avoid giving cereal or other solid foods until infant is around 6 months old. Never add cereal to breast milk or formula in the bottle to thicken it.
- Your baby needs only breast milk or formula. Check with your doctor to be sure they are getting enough.

Babies over 6 months old

- Give your baby more liquids. Your baby is old enough for a little water now.
- Give your baby more foods with fiber like soft fruits and cooked vegetables. Try about 2 to 4 ounces of fruits or vegetables each day.
- Soften one teaspoon of 100% bran cereal with breast milk or formula and add this to your infant's cereal.

THINGS TO AVOID

- Don't switch from a formula with iron to a low-iron formula. In the past, it was thought that iron fortified formula causes constipation. We now know that is not true. Iron is an important nutrient for your infant's growth.
- Don't give your baby honey to treat constipation. Honey can cause infant botulism, a type of food poisoning.
- Don't change formula without first talking with your doctor. Changing formula may cause more problems.
- Don't use laxatives, mineral oil, suppositories, or enemas unless your doctor prescribes them.

Contact the doctor if your baby shows signs of severe pain or has bloody stools with constipation.

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