



# CONSTIPATION IN KIDS

## WHAT IS NORMAL?

- Bowel patterns can be very different for each child. Some children have 1 or 2 bowel movements a day. Others can go 2 to 3 days or longer between bowel movements. Both of these can be normal.
- Your child's stools should be soft, easy to pass, and not painful.

## HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD WITH CONSTIPATION

### More fiber

Slowly increase foods that are high in fiber to prevent or treat constipation. Fiber can't be digested, so it makes our stools softer. Try eating:

- **Fruit**

Children ages 1-3 need around 1 cup of fruit every day. Children ages 4-5 need around 1½ cups of fruit. Try apples, strawberries, pears, oranges, or prunes.



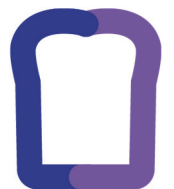
- **Vegetables and Beans**

Children ages 1-3 need around 1 cup of vegetables every day. Children ages 4-5 need around 1½ cups of vegetables. Try lentils, beans, peanut butter, broccoli, or carrots.



- **Whole grains**

Whole grain bread, cooked grains, breakfast cereal, pasta, and brown rice can be good sources of fiber. Make half of your child's grains whole. Look for a whole grain as the first ingredient on the ingredients list.



**Tip:** Look for the Whole Grains Council stamp to easily identify whole grain products.



### WARNING

Children under 4 can choke on nuts, popcorn, fruit skins, and raw vegetables. Cook all vegetables for young children.

## More fluids

Give your child plenty of liquids, especially water, every day. You can also give your child prune, apple, or pear juice. Remember, portion sizes for juice are small. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting fruit juice to 4 ounces (½ cup) a day for children ages 1-3 and 4 to 6 ounces (½–¾ cup) for children ages 4-6.



## More physical activity

Constipation can be caused by not being active enough. Help your child to be active while they play. Limit screen time to 2 hours or less each day. Some fun ideas could be to take a family walk, play music and dance, or play with a ball.

## Regular bathroom breaks

Withholding stools can be another cause of constipation. Your child may be avoiding going to the bathroom because it is painful or he or she doesn't want to take a break from playing. Help your child go to the bathroom regularly. Set aside a quiet time for using the toilet. Doing this after every meal may be an easy way to remember. Encourage and do not rush children when they need to use the bathroom.

If you have tried these tips and you still think your child is suffering from constipation, call your child's doctor. Do not give laxatives, suppositories, or mineral oil to your child without your doctor's advice.

To learn more about WIC and locate a clinic near you, please visit [signupwic.com](https://www.signupwic.com).

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Idaho WIC Program • Form WIC 349 • 11/2022.  
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**HEALTH & WELFARE**  
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