

# Constipation

In babies aged 0-1

## Dirty diapers...what to expect.

It can be hard work for baby 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 typically tan or yellow and pasty. Typically they are the consistency of peanut butter.

### 1st 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.

### 1st month

**Breastfed babies** often stool after every feeding during the first month of life.

**Formula fed babies** may stool around 4-5 times a day in the first week. When they are 2-4 weeks old they may stool around 2 times a day.

### Older than 1 month

Babies often stool 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 more firm and may change colors.



## Is your baby constipated?

Is he or she...

- Excessively fussy?
- Spitting up more than usual?
- Having unusually hard and dry stools?
- Having stools with blood?
- Having dramatically more or fewer bowel movements?
- Straining for more than 10 minutes without success?



## What you can do.

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

### Babies under 6 months old:

- Avoid giving cereal or other solid foods until baby is around 6 months old.
- Your baby needs only breastmilk or formula. Check with your doctor or WIC to be sure they are getting enough breastmilk or formula.

### Babies over 6 months old:

- Give your baby more liquids. Baby is old enough for a little water now. You can offer 2 ounces of 100% prune, pear or apple juice mixed with water twice a day or 4 ounces of water twice a day. Do not give for more than a week or two. Too much juice can be harmful for infants overall diet and growth.
- 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 breastmilk or formula and add this to your baby'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 babies growth.
- Don't give your baby honey to treat constipation. Honey can cause infant botulism, a type of food poisoning.
- Don't change formula until after talking with your doctor or WIC staff. Changing formula may cause more problems.
- Don't use laxatives, mineral oil, suppositories, or enemas unless your doctor prescribes them.



**For babies of any age, contact the doctor if they're showing signs or symptoms, like severe pain or bloody stools, along with constipation.**

**Learn more at:** [Healthychildren.org](http://Healthychildren.org)