

Constipation in Babies

St. Michael's
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You may be worried if your baby does not seem to have a normal stool (poop).

Babies are not all the same.

How often your baby has a stool and how it looks is different for every baby.

Before you decide to change your baby's food or try medicines, use this guide to help you decide if your baby is constipated.

A baby is constipated when their stool (poop) is hard, dry or looks like pellets. Infrequent, soft stool is not a sign of constipation.

Infants who only get breast milk are rarely constipated. Breast milk is very well digested and breastfed babies do not make large amounts of stool. Infants who get formula usually have firmer, more frequent stools.

When should I call the doctor?

- there is blood in the stool
- your baby is vomiting
- these tips do not work and your baby still has stools that look like pellets
- you have other concerns

What can I do to help?

Babies Under 6 Months of Age

- Offer your baby breast milk more often and for a longer time. This will ensure your baby is getting the richest milk possible.
- If you are feeding your baby formula, offer your baby an extra bottle of formula every day to increase the amount of fluid your baby is drinking.
- Offer 1 ounce of water that has been boiled and cooled. Do not give your baby more than 4 ounces of water a day.
- Gently massage your baby's belly.

Babies Over 6 Months of Age

- Continue to give breast milk or infant formula on demand.
- If you are using rice cereal, switch to an oatmeal, barley or a whole grain infant cereal. These cereals have more fibre.
- Offer pureed prunes. Start with 1 tablespoon a day and increase to a maximum of 4 tablespoons a day.
- Offer soft, mashed fruits (Example: pears) and cooked vegetables two to three times a day.
- Offer soft, cooked beans and lentils.
- If your baby is finger feeding you can offer whole grain breads and cereals (Example: Cheerios®, Nutrios®).
- Offer 1 ounce of water to your baby. Only give a maximum of 4 ounces of water a day.