



Integrative Pediatrics, LLC

Safe passage in a changing world.

Constipation

Passing of hard, dry, stool.

Signs: painful BM's, sometimes occasional blood in or on hard stool, chronic stomachaches which are relieved after BM. Soiling underpants with small amounts of liquid stool.

Constipation in children is best managed by making changes in your child's diet. Some things that you can do to treat and prevent constipation in your children include:

Increasing fluids: Increase the amount of clear fluids your child consumes daily.

If your child has chronic constipation issues and weight percentiles are in the normal range, pear or prune juice may be served one to two times daily.

For infants, increase breast-feedings, do not dilute formula. Add 2-4 oz of Pedialyte, prune, or pear juice daily. Juice may be diluted with Pedialyte or water, or given full-strength.

Increasing fiber: Increase the amounts of **fruits** and **vegetables** that your child eats. Vegetable soups are high in fiber and add more fluid to your child's diet. **Increase fiber** in your child's diet by offering bran cereals, bran muffins, shredded wheat, or whole grain bread.

Decrease constipating foods: Foods that may cause constipation include cow's milk, yogurt, cheese, and ice cream. Drinking too much milk (it might only be 2-3 cups a day, but it may be too much for their system) is associated with constipation issues. If you feel cow's milk is causing constipation, you may try **almond, rice, or coconut milk**, which might soften stools. They have calcium but look for additional foods to meet daily calcium requirements.

Carrots, bananas, chips, pizza, refined and processed foods like instant mashed potatoes, frozen dinners, and prepackaged meals are also associated with constipation. Fiber is scarce or absent in processed foods, especially in children's breakfast cereals. Lack of fiber is one of the hallmarks of junk food, fast foods, convenience foods, most snack bars, and breads. To get enough fiber, you've got to eat whole, minimally-processed plant foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts (over age 3yrs) and whole grains. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, Americans eat an average of 5 to 14 grams of fiber daily, falling short of the 20 to 35 grams recommended by the American Dietetic Association.

Increase High Fiber Snacks for Kids

- Fruit (peaches, pears, apricots, plums, prunes, berries, apples)
- Veggies (raw -for older children)
- bran / whole-wheat cookies, muffins

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- a bowl of oatmeal or other high fiber cereal, mixed with raisins
- nutritional cereal/fiber bars
- whole-wheat bagels, bread ,or tortillas with peanut butter
- graham crackers and popcorn (over age 3 yrs)

Additionally, children should have scheduled toilet breaks, once early in the morning and 30 minutes after each meal.

An increase in daily physical activity may reduce chronic constipation issues. Minimally 30 minutes of activity per day.

A daily probiotic (with multiple types of bacteria) may help as well.

If diet changes are not producing results, over-the-counter **MiraLax** may be used. Miralax softens the stool and increases the number of bowel movements by keeping water in the stool. It can be taken at anytime during the day. It is best if your child takes it first thing in the morning. It may be several days before your child has a bowel movement.

How to Mix: Mix one capful (17 grams) of MiraLax powder in 8 ounces (8 ounces = 240 ml. = 1 cup) of a clear beverage (water, Kool-Aid, juice, etc). Dissolve completely.

Your Child's Starting Dose:

Child's Weight	Amount of MiraLax Solution
10 kg /22 lbs	2 oz. twice a day
20 kg/44 lbs	4 oz. twice a day
30 kg /66 lbs	5 oz. once a day
40 kg /88 lbs	7 oz. once a day
50 kg+ /100 lbs	8 oz. once a day

Keep the pre-mixed solution of MiraLax in the refrigerator. It is good for several days. The dose may need to be changed based on bowel results after 4-5 days of use. Give your child enough MiraLax so that there is at least one good bowel movement per day. If loose stools develop, offer ½ doses for 2-3 days, then ¼ doses for 2-3 days before eliminating the Miralax completely. Stop if severe diarrhea occurs.

Call your child's doctor's office for any concerns.