Constipation In Children

Your child is constipated. Constipation causes belly (*abdominal*) cramping and difficulty passing stools. Most often it is due to a diet that does not have enough fiber. It can also be caused by bathroom habits. These include waiting too long to go to the toilet or emotional upsets. **Sometimes passing a hard, constipated stool will cause a small tear in the anal area resulting in small amounts of blood on the toilet paper or stool**. This condition will usually heal without treatment.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Dietary treatment for infants includes adding pear or prune juice, or age and texture appropriate fruits and vegetables such as prunes, pears, peaches, apricots, peas, spinach, or beans.
- Avoid giving apples, bananas or rice cereal.
- Milk products may also increase constipation. Soy formula may be helpful. Consult your pediatrician before any changes are made.
- For older children, add the above fruits and vegetables plus foods containing bran such as whole grain cereals, bran muffins, and whole wheat bread.
- Avoid refined grains and other starches such as white rice, white bread or crackers, and potatoes.
- You should help your child to have regular stools by having him or her sit on the toilet for a few minutes after meals.

A registered dietician can help you and your child get enough fiber that will help lessen problems with constipation. If diet changes do not work right away, you may try a mild laxative. Glycerine suppositories may also be prescribed.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF YOUR CHILD DEVELOPS:

- Increasing pain.
- Does not have a bowel movement after 3 days of treatment.
- Has leaking stools, or passes blood.

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