



Kapa'a Pediatrics, LLC

Constipation in Infants (< 1 year old)

PROBLEM: common causes of constipation in infants include certain formulas or starting solid foods.

1. **Formula:** the most common formula that causes constipation is organic formula. If you started formula, but have not yet started solids then consider switching to a different brand of formula.
2. **Starting Solids:** most infants start eating around 4-6 months of age. Although stools can be a bit thicker they should still be the consistency of soft serve yogurt or softer. Most infants tolerate rice cereal, poi, and other starting baby foods without getting constipated, but sometimes the food just doesn't agree with the gut for one reason or another.

GOAL: bowel movements that are soft and pass easily, whether they occur once per day or once per week. Infrequent stooling is common for young infants (1- 7 months old), but as infants grow older and start eating solids they usually have at least 1 bowel movement per day.

SOLUTION: The key to fixing constipation in infants is identifying it early and treating it aggressively until it is back to normal.

1. **Prevention:** go slow and steady with starches. Make sure that starches like rice cereal, oatmeal, poi, or potato have a lot of added water when being introduced. Banana, although a fruit, is often constipating. Stay away from processed dehydrated starches such as crackers, chips, and biscuits. Infants can start practicing drinking water out of a cup when solids are introduced, especially if they are getting constipated.
2. **As soon** as the doo-doo becomes more firm the following changes should occur.
 - a. Stop all forms of starch. No rice cereal, oatmeal, poi, potato, yams, or crackers.
 - b. Start a whole fruit and vegetable diet. Finely chop fresh fruits and vegetables for your infant. This is better than fruits/veggies out of a jar or pouch.
3. **Continued hard stools!** After 2-3 days, if your child is still constipated then we recommend:
 - a. Infant glycerin suppositories: coat the anus with vaseline and insert one infant suppository rectally one time per day for 2-3 days. If you cannot find infant sized suppositories then ½ of one adult glycerin suppository can be used. They are easily broken and molded by hand.
 - b. Juice: apple, prune, or pear juice, 1 ounce two times per day.

When to call:

1. We would like to know about any patient that is constipated before starting solid foods
2. Vomiting is very rare with infant constipation and should signal something else besides constipation
3. Abdominal pain
4. Fussiness
5. Blood in stool
6. Constipation that does not resolve after trying the above recommendations

*** Patient handouts created by Kapa'a Pediatrics are intended to give parents the most common and pertinent facts about a certain issue. If there is ever any concern that your child was given an incorrect diagnosis or is not following the usual expected course for an illness please call us to speak with a physician. (808) 634-8011 ***