



Kapa'a Pediatrics LLC

Constipation in Children (> 1 year old)

PROBLEM: Common causes of constipation include poor diet, low fluid intake, milk (dairy), decreased activity, and withholding behaviors. One or more of these issues leads to hard, painful, and infrequent stooling patterns.

GOAL: Bowel movements occur once per day and are soft and easy to pass.

SOLUTION: The sooner you address the constipation the easier it will be to fix it. Be vigilant as a parent and monitor your child's stools closely.

1. Increase fiber and water intake at the SAME time. Fruits! Fruits! Fruits! Fruits have high fiber and water, even more so than vegetables. Plus, most kids love fruits. **Foods High in Fiber:** Prunes, Raisins, Papaya, Apples, Mango, Pineapples, Oranges, Pears, Peas, Broccoli, Green beans, Brussel sprouts, Cabbage, Bok choy, Carrots, Corn, Tomato, Kale, Spinach, Brown rice, Oats, Quinoa, Wheat germ, Peanuts, Popcorn, Black beans, Kidney beans, Soybeans
2. **Cow's Milk can cause and/or contribute to constipation.** We do not think that milk is a necessary or important part of a human diet. We recommend ZERO cow's milk, especially if your child is constipated.
3. Remove 100% of dehydrated processed starches like bread, chips, bagels, granola bars, and crackers. Also, cut back on regular starches like rice, potato, and pasta.
4. Retrain good bowel habits. Have your child eat 3-5 times per day and 10 minutes after the meal they should sit on the toilet for 5 minutes. Give only positive encouragement (no scolding for accidents.)
5. Increase fluid intake. This is the only time we recommend juice. Until the constipation has resolved you can use apple, prune, or pear juice. One to two cups a day can help pull water into the GI tract and move stool along.
6. Increase exercise. Turn off the TV and get your child outside playing as much as possible.

Emergency Clean Out!!! If your child has been constipated off and on for weeks or if there has not been a bowel movement for >4 days it is likely that they will need more than just dietary changes. We recommend the following clean out.

1. Coat the anus with vaseline
2. Insert a glycerin suppository or fleets enema rectally, once per day for 2 days.
3. Miralax (polyethylene glycol - generic) is a tasteless powder that has little to no side effects that can be easily mixed in liquid. One cap is 17 grams.
 - a. Clean Out Phase: 1 cap mixed in 12 ounces of water or juice, 2-3 times per day until diarrhea >3 times per day occurs.
 - b. Maintenance Phase: decrease to 1/2 a cap once per day, and adjust the dose by 1/4 cap every 3 days until your child is having 1-2 soft bowel movements per day. This phase can last anywhere from 1 week to several months depending on the degree of constipation.

Call us if child develops:

- Sever abdominal pain, blood in stool, vomiting, or if constipation does not resolve after trying the above recommendations.

*** Patient handouts created by Kapaa Pediatrics are intended to give parents the most common and pertinent facts about a certain issue. If there is ever any concerns 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. ***