

Further information

If you need any more information or advice please contact: 111.

Call 111 if you need medical help fast, but it's not life-threatening – for example, if you:

- Think you need to go to the hospital.
- Don't know who to call for medical help.
- Don't have a GP to call.
- Need medical advice or reassurance about what to do next.



when it's less urgent than 999

For health needs that are urgent, you should call your GP.

If a health professional has given you a number to call for a particular condition, you should continue to use that number.

Information and internet access is also available from the Patient Experience Hub. To get there, follow the signs for the 'Patient Experience Hub' from the Hospital's main entrance.

The information has been produced by the Emergency Department.

Support our Emergency Department


Birmingham Children's Hospital Charity
Doing more for sick kids

With up to 200 children coming to our Emergency Department every day, with everything from broken toes to severe road traffic injuries, there can be a bit of a wait. With your help, we can continue to provide books, toys and activity packs to keep children occupied and distracted during any waits and throughout their treatment journey.



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NHS

Birmingham Women's
and Children's
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice Sheet for

Constipation

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By your side

Information for Parents: What is Constipation?

Constipation is when a child has a hard poo/stool (bowel movement) or does not go to the toilet regularly. There is a lot of difference in the normal firmness and frequency of a stool in a child.

You only need to worry about the firmness and frequency of your child's poo if it seems to be causing a problem. Breast fed babies may have a poo following each feed or only every few days. Bottle fed babies and older children will usually have a poo at least every few days.

Constipation is quite a common problem in children, but with good diet, improvement in bowel habits, and appropriate use of medications, it can usually be controlled.

What are the signs and symptoms?

Constipation can cause:

- Stomach pains.
- Reduced appetite.
- Irritable behaviour.
- Passing a hard poo can cause pain, splits or cracks (also known as anal fissures) and bleeding.
- Constipation can increase the risk of urine infection.

What is the treatment?

Treatment should continue for enough time to allow your child's bowel size and sensation to return to normal.

Treatment should include the following:

Good bowel habits

- It is important for constipated children to develop the habit of sitting on the toilet regularly. You should help them to develop this habit, and make it a calm and relaxed experience.

A good diet

- Fibre makes the poo softer and easier to pass. Giving your child more fibre in their diet can help prevent constipation and can be the single most important factor.
- Foods high in fibre include: Porridge, brown or wholegrain rice, beans, jacket potato, fruits, vegetables.
- Also encourage plenty of fluids, especially water throughout the day.

Laxatives/medication

- Your child will also be given some medication to help their constipation. It takes time for the medication to have a positive effect, as established constipation can take months to clear. This is because the internal muscle of the bowel is stretched and does not move the poo/motion onwards, and it takes a while for this muscle to recover. Sometimes medications will be started by your doctor to help soften the poo and help it move through the bowel. Laxatives will not make the bowel 'lazy'.

Your GP, Health Visitor or a member of the Community Nurse team may give you further advice and help.

Treatment Plan

Data Protection - Looking after and sharing information about your child

We have a duty of care to help patients and families understand how information about them is kept and shared and we include the following information in all our patient leaflets:

Information is collected about your child relevant to their diagnosis, treatment and care. We store it in written records and electronically on computer. As a necessary part of that care and treatment we may have to share some of your information with other people and organisations who are either responsible or directly involved in your child's care. This may involve taking your child's information off site. We may also have to share some of your information for other purposes; such as research etc. Any information that is shared in this way will not identify your child unless we have your consent. If you have any questions and/or do not want us to share that information with others, please talk to the people looking after your child or contact PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on 0121 333 8403.