

Constipation in children under 1

Children who breastfeed can poo after every feed, but it can also take up to ten, even twenty days between poos. Both are normal and don't need to be treated if the amount coming out is appropriate. When a child starts to eat other food it is unusual for there to be more than 2 days without poo.

0-6 months

Children who drink formula, or both formula and breastmilk usually poo every day, or every other day. The poo is firmer than for children who exclusively breastfeed. Sometimes children who eat formula become constipated.

What can I do myself?

Mix the formula/*välling*/porridge according to the instructions on the package. Too much powder/too little water can cause harder poo.

If your child drinks formula you can try and change brand of formula. Talk to a nurse at BVC, they can give advice about which formulas make poo softer.

If you notice that your child tries to poo, but nothing happens, you can take off their nappy/diaper and massage their stomach in a clockwise motion. Stop massaging if you notice your child doesn't like it.

Treatment: *Laktulos* makes poo softer. It can be given from 1 month old. Consult with a doctor to rule out a medical cause of constipation first.

6-12 months

Children can become constipated when they stop using nappies/diapers and start using the toilet/potty. Children who start eating solid food can become constipated if they get too much food at each meal.

Children's emergency department

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What can I do myself?

1-2 teaspoons, twice a day, of *messmör* can be mixed into formula, *välling*, porridge or in other food.

Try to make sure your child drinks enough water and that there is something to drink when they are thirsty. Don't forget that children need to drink more when they eat high fibre foods. If your child has high fibre foods, without drinking enough, they can get stomach pain, gas and become more constipated.

Some children need to have more fibre, like wholewheat bread, *fullkornsvälling* etc, whereas other children become more constipated with extra fibre. One way to get a good amount of fibre is to vary using high fibre products with lower fibre products. It's often easier to change out something that only your child eats, rather than something the whole family eats. Meals with *välling* or porridge should not exceed 3 per day.

Fruit and vegetables have fibre that make poo softer. These types of fibre, that can be found in prunes, pears, figs, raisins, apricots and kiwi fruit, can be given as a purée. They don't require as much water as high fibre products do. There are also prune and pear juices.

Wait until your child is 1 before introducing milk as a drink, or large amounts of yoghurt. They can cause constipation and don't contain enough iron.

Children who stand up to poo can become constipated. If your child uses a nappy/diaper you can try and get them to squat or sit on a potty. Children who sit on a toilet might need a footstool to support their feet.

If your child becomes constipated when you start feeding them solid food, you can reduce the portions, and then increase them again later on.