










PARENTS GUIDE TO BOWEL PROBLEMS

Patient information Leaflet

January 2018

The most common bowel problem in children is constipation. If left untreated it can lead to soiling. An normal stool should be a type 4 on the Bristol Stool Chart (SEE BELOW) A child should poo at least 4 times a week . If any less than this the journey from mouth to bottom takes to long and results in too much water being absorbed which cause the poo to become hard (Type 1-3).

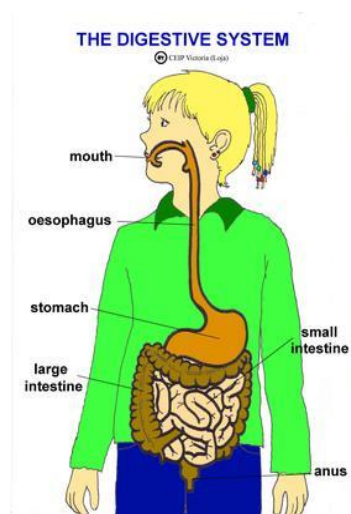
If it is a type 7 this could be diarrhoea , but it could also be overflow caused by constipation. Constipation can affect babies and children or any age, do not wait for treatment the longer it is left the longer it takes to get better.

THE BRISTOL STOOL FORM SCALE (for children)		
choose your		POO!
type 1		looks like: rabbit droppings Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
type 2		looks like: bunch of grapes Sausage-shaped but lumpy
type 3		looks like: corn on cob Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface
type 4		looks like: sausage Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
type 5		looks like: chicken nuggets Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily)
type 6		looks like: porridge Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
type 7		looks like: gravy Watery, no solid pieces ENTIRELY LIQUID

HOW DOES FOOD TURN INTO POO

When you eat the food takes 24-48 hours for it to break down and digest. When it enters the stomach it is mashed up and turned into a soup mixture. From the stomach the soup mixture enters the small bowel where all the nutrients are taken out to be used by the rest of the body.

What is left is waste this enters the large bowel strong muscles squeezes the poo along the bowel. During this process the water is absorbed by the body and the soupy mixture becomes a smooth sausage shaped poo.

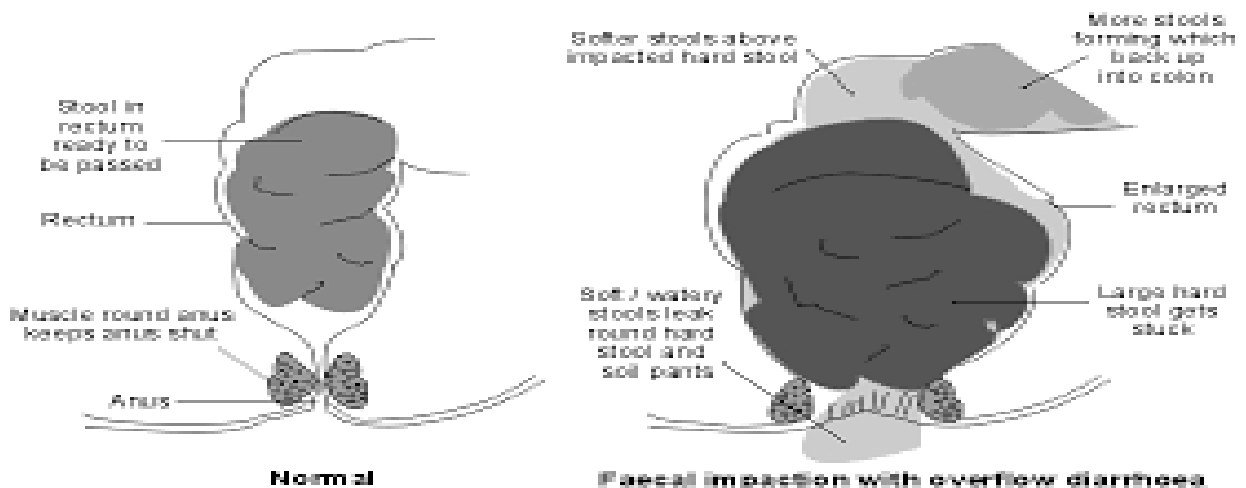


WHAT CAUSES CONSTIPATION

The poo in the large bowel should move everytime the muscle squeezes , like a conveyer belt moving and stopping and moving again. When it reaches the rectum a message is sent to the brain saying “I need to poo”

If a child does not listen to this message either because they don't like to use the toilet when out. Or it could be because the poo is too hard and difficult to pass. This can cause a 'Poo traffic jam' the poo builds up in the large bowel and the longer it stays there, more water is absorbed so it makes it get harder and more difficult to pass.

The messages to the brain from the rectum only happen when the rectum is stretched, if the poo stays there no new messages are sent. The child will have no idea when to poo.



The 'conveyor belt' is still moving due to this a liquid type poo from higher up the bowel can leak around the lumps of poo this could possibly leak out . This is what is called soiling or overflow. This can be very offensive smelling, because it is old poo.

TOILET ROUTINES

Make sure there is a box/step for children to put their feet on, knees should be above the hips. Place a piece of toilet paper in the bowl to prevent the 'splash' as some children are afraid of this. Sit on the toilet for at least 5-10 minutes, approximately 20-30 minutes after every meal . Help the child to relax, have books to read, blow bubbles. Laughing coughing and blowing could also help. Always wash hands after the toilet. Use sticker charts to praise the positive behaviour.

IMPORTANCE OF A HEALTHY DIET

Encourage plenty of non-fizzy drinks for example water, fruit juice (not concentrated) and squash. Aim for 6-8 glasses per day . Avoid excessive milk drinks as this can fill them up. For children which find it difficult to increase the amount they drink, try to include foods that contain high fluids for example gravy, sauces, soups custard, jelly, ice lollies and fruit.

Additionally try increasing the fibre in your child's diet this can be achieved with weetabix, wholemeal bread and pasta. Fruit and vegetables, pulses for example chickpeas lentils baked beans. Or potatoes and jackets with skin left on.

How much fibre does your child need?: your child's age + 5 grams for children over two years, for example if your child is seven years old $7+5 = 12$ grams of fibre a day.

Recommended fluid intake: 4-8 year: 1 litre to 1:4 litre 9-13 year : 1.2 litre to 2.1 litre. 14-18 year: 2.1 litre to 3.2 litre

NO QUICK FIXES

Constipation and soiling can be distressing for children and their families. As a family you need to understand that more than half of the children suffering with constipation will relapse and may need repeated doses of the medication.

It takes time effort and commitment. However with a plan and realistic expectations and work closely with the childrens community nursing team it can be treatable.

References:

Costigan A., Orr, S (2015) How to help a child suffering from constipation: Stay the the course to get everything moving

Eric (2015) www.eric.org.uk/pdf a parents guide to disimpaction

NICE guidelines (2010)

If you have any questions you want to ask, you can use this space below to remind you

If you have a visual impairment this leaflet can be made available in bigger print or on audiotape. If you require either of these options please contact the Patient Information Centre on 0161 922 5332

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آپو آہا آا اٹھیتی پانہی ڈ راتھل ہاڈو اٹھیتی تو ڈھما ڈھئی، اٹھاتی ڈ ڈےتھ ڈیٹاتو
0161 331 5149/5150 اٹھار پھر ہانپڈ ہاڈو تےآو آہاڈو ڈنر اٹھ ڈھو۔

اگر یہ معلومات پڑھ نہیں سکتے ہیں یا آپ کو اس کی سمجھ نہیں آتی ہے تو براہ مہربانی آٹھنک ہیلتھ ٹیم کے ساتھ ٹیلی فون نمبر
0161 331 5149/5150 پر رابطہ کریں تو وہ آپ کی مدد کر سکیں گے۔

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