

## A guide to managing constipation in children 1 year of age and over

### What is constipation?

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Constipation in children can mean any, or all, of the following:

- Difficulty, straining or pain when passing a bowel motion
- Passing a bowel motion less often than normal. Generally, this is less than three complete bowel motions per week
- Bowel motions are hard and perhaps very large, or small, like hard pebbles.

### Possible causes of constipation:

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- Not enough to drink (dehydration)
- Not having meals and snacks at regular times throughout the day
- Not enough fibre e.g. fruit, vegetables, bread and cereals
- Not enough exercise/activity
- Not toileting regularly
- Some medications, like iron supplement pills

### Ways to help prevent constipation:

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1. Encourage 6 cups of fluid/drink a day especially water – and more during hot weather!
2. Set regular times for meals and snacks
3. Encourage your child to eat more foods high in fibre
4. Encourage daily exercise/activity
5. Encourage your child to have a bowel motion and discourage them from “holding on”
6. Limit milk intake to 2 cups (or 400-600ml) per day.

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# How to increase the FIBRE in your child's diet



Fibre is found in fruits and vegetables, wholemeal breads and cereals and legumes (e.g. dried beans, lentils and peas). By slowly increasing the amount of these foods in your child's diet you will increase the total amount of fibre they eat. Be sure to introduce high fibre foods slowly, and also check your child is getting enough to drink and is doing daily activity.



## Sample meal plan:

**Breakfast:** Wheat biscuits  
Milk  
Banana (or other fresh or tinned fruit)



**Morning tea:** Water crackers with smooth peanut butter  
Carrot sticks  
Raisins  
Water

**Lunch:** Wholemeal bread  
Mashed egg and mayonnaise  
Lettuce  
Cucumber sticks  
Milk



**Afternoon tea:** Fruit yoghurt  
Water

**Dinner:** Pasta  
Tomato and meat sauce  
Peas  
Broccoli  
Water



**Supper:** Stewed apples  
Milk

## IF CONSTIPATION PERSISTS - PLEASE SEE YOUR DOCTOR

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