

The Scoop on Poop

You can tell a lot about your child's health just by peeking in the diaper or looking in the toilet. Although the number, consistency, and color of stool may vary per child, this guide will help you determine what's normal or not when it comes to your baby's or child's poop.








What's considered normal frequency of bowel movements for different ages?

Stool Pattern Chart ^{1,2}		
Age	Range of Stool per Day	Average # of Stool
Infant breast-fed	3 to 8	2.9
Infant formula-fed	1 to 3	2
1 year	1 to 4	1.4 to 2
2 to 5 years	0 to 3	1
Above 5 years	0 to 3	1

Although this chart presents ranges and averages, every child is different. It's important to pay attention to your child's own bowel patterns to find out what is 'normal' for your kid.



Which poop type is your child?

Bristol Stool Chart ³		
Type 1		Mini Meatballs Hard pellets that are difficult to pass
Type 2		Bunch of Grapes Firm and formed together with lumps
Type 3		Corn on the Cob Sausage shape with surface cracks
Type 4		Banana Long, smooth and soft
Type 5		Chicken Nuggets Soft blobs with clear edges
Type 6		Beef Chili Fluffy with ragged edges and somewhat mushy
Type 7		Turkey Gravy Watery and liquid

If your child exhibits stool types 1 and 2, he or she is likely constipated. Types 3 and 4 are what you want to see, and are healthy and normal. Type 5 indicates a lack of fiber and sometimes can indicate diarrhea.⁴ On the other hand, Types 6, and 7 indicate signs of diarrhea, especially if there are multiple bowel movements of those type a day. Contact your child's primary care provider if watery stools persist.

What color is my child's poop?

Poop varies in color, smell and size! It can also alert parents to health concerns.

Breastfed baby poop will primarily have a mustard yellow color, but can also appear green or brown at times.^{5,6} Each of these colors indicate a healthy baby that is properly digesting food. Babies have an easier time digesting breast milk due to the whey protein, which means their stools will be more broken down and watery, and shouldn't have the strong odor typical with poop from formula fed infants.⁷

Formula fed baby poop may be slightly different in color, and can exhibit a yellow, tan, green, or brown color when your baby is healthy.^{5,6} Formula fed babies have firmer stools due to the higher amount of minerals in formula, leading to more waste to excrete.^{6,7}

As babies start getting introduced to solids, their poop color will start to reflect what they eat. For example, eating spinach or taking an iron supplement may produce a greenish poop, while beets may cause poop to be red.

If your baby doesn't have anything red in her diet, red poop may be an indication of a milk protein allergy, a bacterial infection or lower GI bleed.⁶ In breastfed babies, this may also be a result of digested blood from feeding on cracked, bleeding nipples.⁶ White baby poop, on the other hand, may signify that your baby is having trouble digesting food (specifically fat) due to a lack of bile coming from the liver.⁶ When either of these happen, it's best to contact your child's pediatrician to assess the situation.



Constipation in kids

Constipation is a common problem in babies and in young children characterized by the passing of infrequent hard stools, which is sometimes accompanied by pain. Making grunting noises, redness in the face, and crying are some other signs that your little one may be constipated. Older kids may avoid going to the bathroom altogether and hold it in to prevent the pain associated with a bowel movement.

Constipation tends to be caused by lack of exercise, your child's diet, and limited water intake.



Here are some ways you can help your child with their constipation:

1

Add fiber rich foods to their diet such as fruits and vegetables. When in doubt, think about the P's: pears, prunes, papaya, and plums. They are great sources of fiber and act as a natural laxative. Avoid prune juice, as it lacks fiber.



2

Promote exercise. A moving body helps aid digestion and move food along the intestines. Encourage your kids to play outside instead of sitting in front of the television. For babies, lightly massage your little one's stomach with baby oil and push his knees towards his stomach a few times in a bicycle pattern to get things moving.



3

For older kids, give them ample time in the bathroom for a stress-free environment. Place a stool in the bathroom and have your child prop her feet on it when sitting on the toilet. This is the ideal position (squatting) for comfortably passing a stool and will allow your child to use her stomach muscles to push through.

4

Encourage your child to drink plenty of water. Hydration is essential to keep bowel movements regular. As a rule of thumb, give your child the number of 8 ounce cups of water equivalent to her age + a little extra. For example, a 4-year-old should drink four to five, 8 ounce cups of water a day. See our site for more [specific fluid recommendations](#).



More resources

Visit our site [SuperKids Nutrition](#) and use the search option with key words like constipation and fiber to find more information. Learn fun ways to get your kids to move more in our [fitness and family](#) section. If problems of constipation still persist, contact your child's pediatrician.

Don't miss out on our fun recipes, activities and much more in our [Super Crew Healthy Kids Today Tool Kits](#) with the American Institute of Cancer Research.

Our guidance doesn't stop here- we're always looking for more ways to help! Check out some of our other resources to keep your momentum going:

- **Need ideas for healthy meals and snacks, or tips for picky eaters?**
Check out our [nutrition articles](#) for a treasure trove of great info and ideas.
- **Trying to get dinner on the table?**
Print our [coloring pages](#) and [activities](#) to keep your kids entertained while learning about healthy eating from the Super Crew.
- **Looking to improve the health of your family?**
Get the in-depth knowledge and skills you need with our convenient and flexible [online nutrition courses](#).
- **Want the latest tips and tricks?**
Stay up-to-date with the SuperKids by joining the conversation on [Pinterest](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and SuperKids Nutrition Founder's [Blog](#)!

References:

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