



## CONSTIPATION

### WHAT IS CONSTIPATION?

- When stools are lumpy, hard, and dry.
- When it is painful and hurts to go.
- When feeling that not all of the stool has passed.
- When time between stooling is more than 3 days.

### WHAT IS NORMAL STOOLING?

- Infants typically stool 1-3 times each day but can go 4-7 days without stooling.
- Children typically stool 1-2 times each day but could go once every 2-3 days.
- Adults typically stool 1-3 times each day but could go once every 1-2 days.

### WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF CONSTIPATION?

The cause of constipation can vary; these are a few common ones:

- Changes in diet or eating many processed or low fiber foods
- Drinking too little water or too much milk
- Illness and medication
- Stress
- Not going to the bathroom, because it hurts or you are too busy
- Travel
- Not being active everyday
- Pregnancy or post-delivery

**Talk with your doctor if your symptoms do not get better. Hold off on taking medication until speaking to your doctor.**



## WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT CONSTIPATION?

When constipation occurs, it is important to address it quickly. Here are a few things to help constipation:

1. Eat more fiber rich foods. Foods that are rich in fiber include:
  - › Fresh fruits—apples, pears, strawberries, oranges
  - › Fresh vegetables—broccoli, carrots, sweet potato
  - › Beans or legumes
  - › Nuts, seeds, or dried fruit—be careful, these can be a choking hazard for young children
  - › Whole grains—brown rice, oats, whole grain breakfast cereal, whole grain bread and pastas

Reading food labels can help to identify fiber rich foods. Look for 3 or more grams of fiber per serving.

2. Drink plenty of water every day.
  - › Offer children water frequently and limit milk to 2-3 servings per day.
  - › Parents, set a good example. Drink lots of water and aim for 2-3 servings of milk per day.
  - › Fruit juice should be limited to 1 serving per day.

Infants should not drink water before 6 months; human milk or formula is all they need. No juice before one year of age.

3. Be active every day with inside or outside exercise.
4. Go to the bathroom at the first sign a stool is ready. Holding a stool increases the risk of constipation.
5. Set aside quiet time each day for your child to use the toilet.

