

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Constipation

## What is constipation?

Constipation is when stool moves slowly through the large intestine. It does not come out often enough, and comes out hard and dry. Some signs include:

- less bowel movements than usual
- stools are hard to pass
- it hurts to pass stool
- cramps, pains in stomach
- upset stomach
- straining with bowel movements
- belly is swollen
- blood in the stool, or blood from the rectum

Is constipation common? Yes.

## What to do:

- yes  no Your child should eat more fruits and vegetables each day.
- yes  no When stools are dry, your child should drink more water than usual.
- yes  no Help your child be more active every day.



**Your child should eat more fruits  
and vegetables each day.**

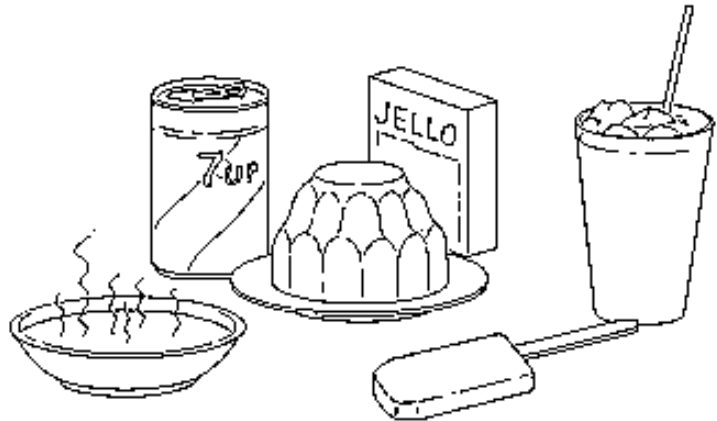
yes  no Have your child sit on the toilet for three to five minutes, three times a day. The best time for your child to sit on the toilet is after a meal. It is all right if your child is not able to do this at school after lunch.

• Do not ask your child to sit on the toilet for more than five minutes.

• Do not rush bathroom visits.

• Make sure your child takes in water and other fluids with meals and between meals, every day.

yes  no Raisins, prunes, plums, peaches, apricots and fresh squeezed juice may help keep the stool soft.



**Make sure your child takes in water and other fluids with meals and between meals, every day.**

• Do not give your child laxatives, herbs or natural laxatives unless your doctor tells you to.

• If your doctor recommends medicines for the constipation, give them to your child every day until your doctor tells you to stop.

• Too much fiber (from some medicines, or too many fruits or vegetables) can cause gas and cramps.



If you have any questions or concerns,  
 call your child's doctor or  call \_\_\_\_\_

yes  no If your child has painful bowel movements or does not have a bowel movement at least once every seven days, call your doctor.

## Now that you've read this:

- Tell your nurse or doctor what causes constipation. (Check when done.)
- Tell your nurse or doctor what you will do to treat your child's constipation. (Check when done.)

If you want to know more about child health and illness,  
visit our library at The Emily Center at Phoenix Children's Hospital  
1919 East Thomas Road  
Phoenix, AZ 85016  
602-546-1400  
866-933-6459  
[www.phoenixchildrens.com](http://www.phoenixchildrens.com)

#### Disclaimer

The information provided at this site is intended to be general information, and is provided for educational purposes only. It is not intended to take the place of examination, treatment, or consultation with a physician. Phoenix Children's Hospital urges you to contact your physician with any questions you may have about a medical condition.

#8 • Written by Nancy Rayhorn, BSN, RN, CGRN • Illustrated by Dennis Swain  
This handout is also available in Spanish as #367/8s.