

# Does your child suffer from constipation?

## What is constipation?

When your child is constipated your child is not passing poo as often as they normally do, or they strain more than they usually do, or they are unable to completely empty their bowels. Constipation can also cause faeces (bowel motion) to be unusually hard, lumpy, or small.

## What can cause constipation?

- Not having enough fluid.
- Not having enough fibre.
- Being less active.
- Ignoring the urge to go to the toilet.
- Some medication may also cause constipation.

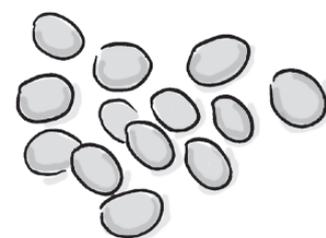
## What is fibre and what does it do?

- Fibre is the part of cereals, fruit and vegetables that cannot be digested. It is usually the skins, pips and seeds of these foods which contain the most fibre.
- Fibre and plenty of fluids help to make a softer poo which is easier to pass.

## Which foods are rich in fibre?



Bread and chapattis made with brown, wholemeal, medium or high fibre white flour.



Pulses: all pulses contain fibre, e.g. dahl, beans and chick peas.



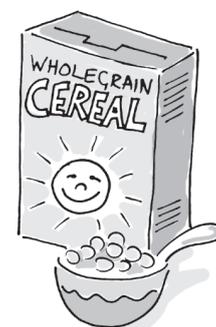
Cake and biscuits which are made with wholemeal flour or contain dried fruit, eg. scone, fruit cake, carrot cake, digestive biscuits, Hob Nobs, Garibaldi biscuits and fig rolls.

Fruit and vegetables: all fruit and vegetables contain fibre including fresh, frozen, tinned and dried.



Brown or wholemeal varieties of rice and pasta.

Wholegrain breakfast cereals e.g. Weetabix, Ready Brek, Porridge, Shreddies.



## The following ideas may help to relieve your child's constipation:

1. Give your child foods rich in fibre - remember to increase the amount of fibre gradually.
2. Give your child plenty to drink during the day.
3. You may find foods and/or drinks containing prebiotics or probiotics help too e.g. Actimel, Yakult, wholegrains.

## Handy Hints

- Add extra vegetables to pasta sauces, stews, casseroles and curries.
- Add dahl to meat curries.
- Add fresh, tinned or dried fruit to breakfast cereals, milk puddings, yoghurts and jellies.
- Try to give your child fruit and vegetables every day.
- To encourage your child to drink more try using a fun cup/glass e.g. with a favourite character, or try colourful, crazy-shaped loopy straws.

## Drinks

Try to give 6-8 drinks per day such as water, diluted unsweetened fruit juice, diluted squash, milk shakes and fruit smoothies.

Remember drinks can be given warm or cold.

If your child has their drinks thickened, remember these still provide fluid for their body.

## Anything Else!

Don't expect these changes to work straight away. It may take some time, so **DON'T** give up!

If these measures don't help please seek further medical advice. Your doctor may prescribe medication to help with your child's constipation.



### **Food for Life Bradford Dietitians**

Bradford Nutrition & Dietetic Service is located within Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

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