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Children Get Constipated, Too

By Dr. Loretta Lanphier, ND, CCN, HHP

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by: **Dr. Loretta Lanphier, ND, CCN, HHP**

Do you notice your child putting off going to the bathroom because he/she is busy doing more important things? Do you notice avoidance of the bathroom for fear of a painful bowel movement? Is your child not experiencing daily bowel movements? These actions may be signals of constipation.

Parents often hope their worries about their children's bathroom habits will end with the final diaper. But successful toilet training doesn't prevent occasional troubles with bowel movements. Constipation is among the most common but should never be considered normal.

Unfortunately most of the medical literature defines childhood constipation as not the frequency of bowel movements but the hardness of the stool. According to the Physicians' Manual for Patients, "Daily bowel movements are not essential to health." Parents are told that as long as the child is having three bowel movements a week AND they are soft that this is totally normal. Not so! Just as we eat three meals per day, a child should be experiencing between 1 to 3 bowel movements per day. Food should never be sitting in the digestive track longer than 24 hours. Ideally, everyone should have comfortable, unforced bowel movements 20–30 minutes after every meal.

Because the discussion of bowel movements between child and parent usually brings out total dread in parents, it is often ignored and assumed that the child is experiencing bowel movements each day. Many of us remember cringing when a grandparent asked us "Have you had a bowel movement today?" The cringe was not necessarily because of the question but because it was usually asked very loudly at the dinner table! You see, in their generation this was considered a very important function for good health. Somewhere along the line we have stopped looking at this as an important clue in overall health. Digestive track health is considered by many to be the most important function in keeping the body healthy.

Causes Of Childhood Constipation Diet & Nutrition – Not eating enough foods with fiber; Dehydration; Consuming a lot of sugar and desserts; Milk and dairy products; Food Allergies; Acid forming foods

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(meat). Lack of Exercise - With the popularity of computer games and TV many children are leading a very sedentary lifestyle. Emotion Upsets & Anxiety - Fear, grief, worry and frustration have all been known to affect the digestive tract. Holding stools - This means the child has the feeling of needing to have a bowel movement, but ignores the urge. Reasons such as not wanting to take the time to go to the bathroom, unfamiliar bathrooms or pain in passing a stool are very common. Prescription Drugs – Antihistamines, such as diphenhydramine (Teparil or Benadryl), found in nonprescription cold medications; Antidiarrheal medications; Antispasmodics, such as atropine and scopolamine; Narcotics, such as codeine and hydrocodone; Chemotherapy; Anticonvulsants, such as carbamazepine and valproic acid; Tricyclic antidepressants, such as amitriptyline hydrochloride or doxepin hydrochloride; Iron supplements. Other less common causes of constipation are depression, attention deficit disorders, and sexual abuse.

Constipation Symptoms Less than 1 bowel movement per day. Stools that are hard and difficult to pass. Headaches, fatigue and/or depression. Encopresis, or accidental fecal soiling. Often if a hard

stool is present in the rectum, liquid feces can leak around the hard stool and pass out the anus without the child's control. This can happen many times during the day. The child cannot do anything to prevent or withhold it. Abdominal pain near or around the navel. Bed-wetting. Decreased appetite and nausea.

Prevention Diet—The most important thing is to increase fluid intake. However, some children get into the habit of only drinking sodas to satisfy their thirst. Most children are dehydrated from sugary drinks and from not taking the time out to quench thirst. Offer clean, pure water. A child should be drinking half of his/her body weight in water each day. Include servings of fresh, organic fruit and vegetables. Teach your child to eat raw as much as possible. Make 50% of each meal fresh, raw, unprocessed foods. Include whole grains, nuts and seeds in the diet. Limit white flour, chocolate, sugar, dairy and milk products. Train your child to eat slowly and moderately. Provide a relaxing environment while eating. Take a probiotic supplement daily to facilitate the growth of "friendly bacteria" in the colon. Bowel habit training—Your child should be taught not to wait to have a bowel movement. To establish a regular bowel habit, ask your child to sit on the toilet for at least 10 minutes at about the same time each day, preferably after a meal. Make sure your child can place his or her feet firmly on the floor while sitting on the toilet. If this is not possible, put a footstool in front of the toilet. While your child is sitting on the toilet, you might let your child read a storybook or listen to the radio. Educate your child, at an early age, on the importance of good bowel habits. Let them know that this is not something to be embarrassed about but a normal and very necessary function for good health. Exercise—Make sure that your child is getting enough exercise. Children spend way too much time in front of computers and TV. Encourage outside activities as much as possible. Physical activity speeds the movement of waste through the digestive tract. Stress—Yes, children experience stress! Children are some of the busiest people I know. Stress causes the body to break down and constipation can be a result. Talk with and spend time with your children. Teach them how to relax and to be calm. Encourage them, support them and speak encouraging words to them. Teach them how to handle difficult situations, to be happy and to communicate their problems. Most important—model this behavior in front of them. Keep The Bowel Clean—Keeping the bowel clean is a great preventative step and very necessary in keeping the body in good health. For complete cleansing of the digestive tract we recommend a product called Oxy Powder. Oxy Powder is a safe and natural way to cleanse

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the whole digestive track while also providing the body with oxygen. Consult your healthcare practitioner for dosages appropriate for children. Chiropractic Adjustments - Helps prompt bowel movements. The waves that move material through the colon occur as a result of nerve excitement that originates at the spinal nerves. Adjustments also help normalize the action of the ileocecal valve, the valve that separates the large from the small intestine.

Constipation can undermine the whole body and it is now known that irregular bowel movements are directly related to serious health conditions. Constipation does not have to be a problem if you will practice prevention with your children and implement the suggestions found in this article. Regular bowel movements are an important mechanism for removing toxins from the body and thus keeping the body healthy. Remember: Prevention is always the key. As always, if severe symptoms persist, do not hesitate to see your healthcare professional.

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Constipation Causes & Relief

By Jeff Foster

Relief from constipation relief can be a welcoming feeling if you are the one who is suffering from constipation.

The most common gastrointestinal complaint in America is in fact constipation.

Constipation happens when your body waste remains in the colon for too long and too much water is absorbed into the intestines leaving a dry, hard stool which causes discomfort and can eventually lead to constipation.

If the problem becomes severe enough, bowel movements may become uncomfortable, difficult and even painful. You may even experience bloating as a result of being constipated.

Many people feel that if they do not have a bowel movement once a day they are constipated.

This in fact is not true.

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Regularity differs from person to person. For some, three bowel movements a day may be normal; while for others three a week may be the norm.

Knowing what is normal for you can help relieve anxiety, however if you feel you are indeed constipated, there are several ways to get relief.

Prevention is the best form of relief.

A poor diet is one of the leading causes of constipation. A diet high in animal fat or refined sugar combined with not enough whole grains and vegetables are a couple eating habits that can lead to constipation.

Fiber is an essential nutrient to promote regular bowel movements. According to the American Dietetic Association (ADA), the average adult should get 20 to 35 grams of fiber every day. However, the ADA also reports that Americans currently take in only between 12 and 17 grams a day. Making it no wonder that constipation is the number one gastrointestinal complaint in America. Fiber helps to prevent excessive water absorption by the colon allowing your bowels to move the waste through the colon.

Constipation is also caused by certain medications. If you have started a medication and notice that you have become constipated talk with your doctor to see if he can change the dose or possibly put you on an alternative medication to give you constipation relief.

A lack of exercise can also lead to constipation. Becoming more active and mobile will help your bowels to move, resulting in constipation relief.

It is important to go to the bathroom if you have the urge, as resisting the urge to have a bowel movement can cause constipation.

Severe cases of constipation may require laxative treatment.

Constipation relief is generally achieved with lifestyle change. Getting plenty of exercise, drinking sufficient amounts of water and eating a diet high in fiber can help you get constipation relief.

If you are constipated, see your doctor to get the underlying cause of your constipation. With your doctors help you can obtain constipation relief.

For more important information on stomach pain be sure to visit

where

you will find advice and tips on common stomach pain causes such as constipation, ulcers, and other articles that you can view at

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