

Constipation in Children

Constipation is a condition of improper bowel movement. Usually the child experiences pain and has a hard time passing dry and hard stool. In normal condition there is no pain while passing the stool and it has a soft texture. The bowel movement is also regular. A child having constipation not only finds it difficult to pass stool, but at times will feel the urge to pass and when he goes to the toilet, he cannot relieve himself.

The digestive system is responsible from the intake of the food to the smooth passage of waste. The food or fluids are consumed from the mouth, which heads towards the stomach via the food pipe. After the stomach treats the food with acid, it passes on to the small intestines and then to the large intestines, also known as bowels. The final stage of food digestion is the outlet through of the waste through the anus and rectum. During the whole processing, the body parts absorb nutrients and water from the food supplied to them. The left over matter comes out as waste.

It is a myth among some people who say that an individual is constipated if he or she doesn't pass stool on a daily basis. But the truth is that the bathroom habit differs from one individual to other. So if constipation is to be checked the regular pattern of bathroom habit of that particular individual must be checked and the comparisons must not be made with the other.

Other than not passing stool regularly, the child feels full most of the times and is a little uncomfortable. The belly can also feel stretched because of the full feeling. The child makes great effort to pass and the experience is very painful. Even after passing, the child may feel the urge of passing more stools. Because of the hard stool, it cause small tears in the anus skin and there will be little blood on the toilet paper. The child should immediately tell this to his parents, who can take care of the situation immediately. Some kids who have a worse condition will pass watery stool, something similar to diarrhea, and mucus along with the hard stool.

Constipation is becoming more and more widespread because of the unhealthy diet pattern followed by most of us today. With the trend of fast food, other fatty, starchy and sugary foods, children aren't getting the required amount of fiber, which in turn slows down the bowels. It is the responsibility of the parents to make their children eat fiber enriched foods such as vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Along with eating food rich with fiber, it is also a must to drink enough fluids. Water is the best fluid for this condition. Fluids help to soften the stool and allow smooth passage within the intestine. Insufficient intake of fluids makes the stool dry and hard. Children are becoming more stagnant because

of video games, internet and television, which are leaving them with little or no time for physical exercise. Exercise helps the food to move through the digestive system. Lesser active play time and physical activity is also a major cause of constipation. Medicines should be avoided and should be taken only when doctor recommends them.

Stress and anxiety can play havoc over the digestive system. School going kids are usually stressed out because of the homework, assignments, and exams. An adult can talk the kid out of the stress. Children, who have the irritable bowel syndrome or IBS, worsen their condition because of stress. Spicy and fatty foods can also act as triggers, along with the stress. Kids having this syndrome might even experience gas and belly pain. Sometimes children avoid going to the bathroom when they feel the need for. Usually unclean restrooms keep children away. But when the nature's call is neglected, it becomes harder to go at a later time. In very rare cases, medical conditions such as lupus, diabetes and thyroid gland malfunctioning can also lead to constipation.

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