

Baby Constipation

Constipation

Because every baby is different, constipation cannot be determined by the frequency of bowel movements but rather the size and consistency of your baby's stools. If your baby is constipated, their stools will be dry and hard and either unusually small or large. Passing these stools may cause straining or pain. To avoid the pain of passing these hard stools, some babies subconsciously try and stop their bowel movements causing the constipation to continue. Constipation can also cause loss of appetite, discomfort and particularly smelly wind or stools and you may notice that your baby begins to refuse their food. Breastfed infants will usually have much softer stools than bottlefed babies, so if you have recently switched bottlefeeding, you may notice a change in your babies stools.

The causes of constipation

A change of diet, dehydration or a minor illness like a cold can all cause your baby to become constipated but in many cases it's difficult to pinpoint the exact cause. Breastfed babies are much less likely to suffer from it because breastmilk is more easily digested than formula milk.

Ways to ease your baby's discomfort

- Give your baby boiled, cooled water to drink in between feeds if you're bottlefeeding, but don't dilute formula.
- If you're using infant formula, make sure feeds are being made up correctly (1 scoop to 30mls/1 fl oz of water) – too much infant formula powder will make the feed too concentrated.
- Use a little baby oil to gently massage your baby's tummy in a clockwise direction – but make sure your baby seems relaxed and comfortable.
- Move your baby's legs in a cycling motion to loosen any blockages.
- A warm bath can encourage bowel movements. Once dry, apply some cream or petroleum jelly around their bottom to soothe and prevent soreness.

You could also try an infant formula with added prebiotics as they can help to soften your baby's stools.

If you are at all concerned about your baby's health, consult your midwife or health visitor. And if you have any questions, you can always call our team on **08457 623 628** between 8am and 8pm Monday to Friday, or chat with them instantly, online, via Live Chat - available 9am to 5pm, Monday - Friday.