

BABY POOS

What is normal for babies?

As a parent you may be unaware of what your baby's bowel habits should be and every baby is different. Even so, there is a pattern of bowel motions that corresponds to a baby's age and diet.

- ❑ Breast fed baby's poo more often than formula fed babies or those on solids
- ❑ Breast fed infants have runnier poos than babies who are on formula or solids
- ❑ Children decrease the number of poos per day as they get older

What is the normal appearance of baby and infant poos?

Feed Type	Consistency	Colour
Breast milk	Runny to pasty	Mustard yellow to light brown
Formula	Pasty	Yellow to light brown
Solids	Pasty to solid	Light brown to dark brown

What is a normal bowel movement?

By the time your baby is ready to go home, his/her bowel movements will probably be yellow or light brown in colour. Some babies may have a bowel movement with every feed while others may have one every day or six days. It is important that your baby has passed a bowel motion within the first 24-48 hours of life and if this has not occurred your baby should be reviewed by a medical officer.

If your baby is formula fed and has not had a bowel motion for 2-3 days and seems uncomfortable, or has a bowel motion that is hard and pebbly, he/she may be constipated (see below).

Breast fed babies may not have bowel movements every day.

Bowel habits will alter with small frequent breastfeeds, changing from breast milk to formula, changing from milk to solids, fever, medication and tummy upsets.

Grunting Noises

It is common for premature babies and term babies to make grunting noises in their sleep, however you may not have noticed these noises as much in the hospital environment because of monitors, telephones etc. When you get home and it is quiet you will notice these grunts more readily. This noise does not mean that your baby is having difficulty passing a bowel motion.

What is constipation?

Constipation is when a baby (or child/adult) has dry hard stools that are difficult to pass. If babies have hard dry pebbly poos this means they are constipated. Some babies being fed formula may get constipated while their body adjusts to the formula. No particular brand of formula will prevent your baby from getting constipated and as they all vary slightly one formula may ultimately suit your baby better than another. It is rare for a change in formula to completely resolve constipation. If your baby has not passed a stool for several days or his/her poo is hard and pebbly then you should seek advice.

What can you do for constipation?

- ❑ If you are formula feeding ensure that you are making the formula correctly, if you are putting more powder in the water than is specified in the recipe this can cause constipation. Also make sure that you add the powder to the water, not adding water to the powder.
- ❑ You can offer 20 mls 2-3 times per day of cooled boiled water in a separate bottle.
- ❑ If your baby continues to be constipated despite having given extra water you should seek advice from your medical practitioner.
- ❑ Your doctor may advise the use of coloxyl drops or lactulose if constipation continues. If they advise these medications follow the recommendations provided.
- ❑ Prune juice or adding sugar to formula is not recommended for babies under 6-9 months who are not on solids.