

## Parents/Carers

Constipation is common in childhood. Always seek advice if you think your child might have a problem. It is important get help early to stop it getting worse.

If you know your child needs help to sit without support they may need a special potty chair or toilet seat. Ask your nurse or Occupational Therapist about what sort of equipment they might need.

There are lots of things that can make sitting on the toilet more fun. Doing activities like blowing bubbles and pushing down into their bottom can help. Make sure the room is warm and well lit. Some children don't like the 'splash' when they have done a poo, it can help to put toilet paper in the toilet first.

Use special child friendly wipes to encourage your child to learn to wipe their own bottom.

Other leaflets in this series:

- Promoting healthy bladders

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Bladder and Bowel UK, working as part of Disabled Living Manchester, provides impartial advice and information regarding products and services for children and adults with bowel and/or bladder problems

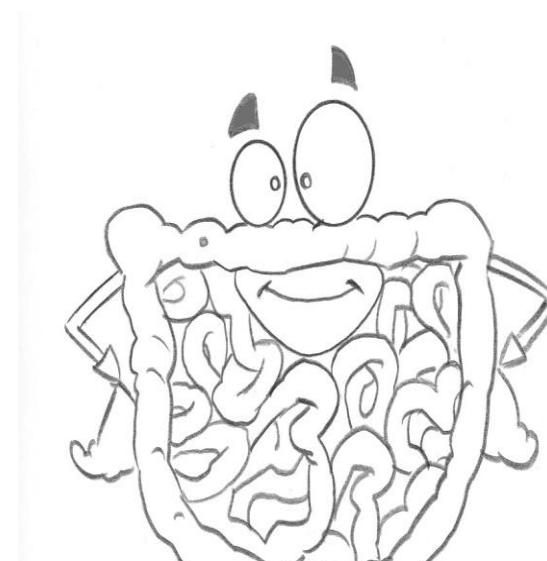
For further advice and support contact your Health Visitor or nurse at:

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# Promoting healthy bowels

## Preventing constipation: information for children and parents/carers



## Going for a poo

Everybody goes for a poo. Think of the most famous person you know - even they go for a poo! Most people do a poo every day or at least 3 times a week.

## Keeping your bowels healthy

Bowels like things done regularly so make sure you give yourself time to go to the toilet every day. If there is no time before school then make sure you find time after school. A good time to try and do a poo is after a meal.

Drink plenty of water based drinks - at least 6 each day. The job of the last part of your bowel is to absorb water, this will happen even if you don't drink much. So if you don't drink enough, your poo can become hard and more difficult to pass.

Eat lots of fruit and vegetables (at least 5 portions a day). Other food with lots of fibre such as brown bread and baked beans are also good. You can work out how much fibre to eat by adding 5 to your age e.g. 5 + 5yrs = 10grams of fibre per day.

Take lots of exercise like running round and playing games outside. If you are not able to run around you may be seeing someone called a physiotherapist.

Ask the physiotherapist or your nurse about something called 'abdominal massage'. This is when someone rubs your tummy in a way which helps the poo move along your bowel and also makes it easier to come out.

They may also show you some exercises you can do with your legs which can help as well.

When you feel that you need to poo you should go to the toilet as soon as possible and not try to wait.

## Sitting on the toilet

It is important that you sit on the toilet or potty properly, with your knees bent and your feet either flat on the floor or resting on a step. If you are small you might need a special toilet seat reducer to help you sit properly.

