

Constipation in babies 0–6 months

What is it? How is it treated?

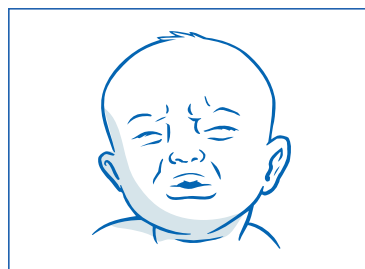
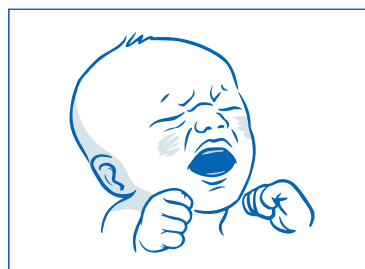
Are you worried your baby may be constipated?

It can be hard to tell why your little one is crying or uncomfortable and tummy troubles are often the cause. A breastfed baby will very rarely get constipation because breast milk is more easily digested than formula.

How would I know if my baby is constipated?

Constipation is a bit more than your baby's face turning bright red and pushing hard when they have a poo. Symptoms may include:

- Fewer than three bowel movements a week
- Crying and discomfort, irritability or pain before or when doing a poo
- Dry hard poo (either large or pellet-like) that your baby has difficulty in passing
- Tummy pain
- Loss of appetite
- Blood-streaked poo which could be due to tiny cracks in the skin caused by passing hard poo



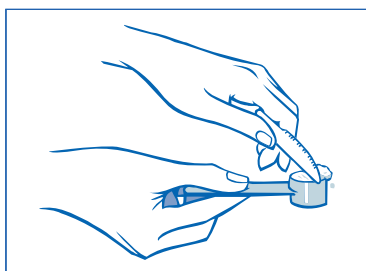
Do

- ✓ Remember it can be quite normal for a bottlefed baby to go a few days without having a poo. If your baby has plenty of wet nappies and is not distressed then there's not too much to worry about.
- ✓ Make sure that any formula milk is mixed properly – a feed that is too concentrated can lead to constipation.



Don't

- ✗ Don't dilute your baby's formula milk – you must ensure the correct amount of powder and water are mixed together. Always follow manufacturer's instructions.
- ✗ Don't pack formula into the measure. Level off the scoop to ensure the correct amount of powder is added to the water.



Top Tips

- A gentle tummy massage can relax the stomach muscles.
- Gently move your baby's legs in a bicycling motion to help move the poo along the intestine.
- If your baby is having formula, give them a little cooled boiled water between feeds, but don't dilute the formula.
- Try switching to a ready-to-use formula, as baby's stools will be softer.
- If these symptoms persist, or you have any concerns about constipation, speak to your midwife, health visitor or doctor.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The best way to feed a baby is to breastfeed, as breast milk provides the ideal balanced diet and protection against illness for your baby and also many non-nutritional benefits for both baby and mother. We recommend that you speak to your healthcare professional when deciding on your choice of feeding your baby. Professional guidance should also be sought on the preparation for and maintenance of breastfeeding. If you do choose to breastfeed, it's important to eat a healthy, balanced diet. Infant formula is intended to replace breast milk when mothers choose not to breastfeed or if for some reason they are unable to do so. A decision not to breastfeed, or to introduce partial bottle-feeding, will reduce the supply of breast milk. If for any reason you choose not to breastfeed, do remember that such a decision can be difficult to reverse. Using infant formula also has social and financial implications which must be considered. Infant formula should always be prepared, used and stored as instructed on the label, in order to avoid risks to a baby's health.