

Bristol stool chart

Baby's stool is a conversation parents frequently have with healthcare professionals, with questions about why their baby's stool looks the way it does, to whether their baby is constipated.

This chart is a general guide, designed to help better determine the stool consistency during your conversations with parents.

Type 1 and 2 indicate constipation

Type 3 and 4 are easiest to pass

Type 5 and 6 may indicate diarrhoea

Type 7 may be a sign of illness

The consistency of stool depends on how long it has spent in the colon and therefore how much liquid is absorbed.

Stool forms on this chart and indication of constipation may not apply to exclusively breastfed babies after 6 weeks of age (NICE, 2010).

Longer time



Shorter time

TYPE 1		Separate hard lumps like nuts (hard to pass)
TYPE 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
TYPE 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on its surface
TYPE 4		Like a sausage or a snake, smooth and soft
TYPE 5		Soft blobs with clear cut edges (passed easily)
TYPE 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
TYPE 7		Watery, no solid pieces, entirely liquid

Adapted from the Bristol stool scale (Lewis and Heaton 1997)

Reference: 1. Lewis SJ, Heaton KW (1997) Stool form scale as a useful guide to intestinal transit time. *Scandinavian Journal of Gastroenterology* 32: 920-4. 2. NICE (2010). Constipation in children and young people. Diagnosis and management. Clinical guideline (CG99). Available at <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg99>. Accessed September 2021.