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GUIDELINES FOR DIETARY MANAGEMENT OF CONSTIPATION IN INFANTS

How to tell if an infant is constipated

True constipation in infants is very rare. Stool frequency can vary considerably from one infant to another. For example, it is normal for some infants to have one bowel action per week and for other infants to have several bowel actions each day.

PAIN AND DISTRESS associated with passing a stool are indicators that a baby may be constipated. In contrast, *straining* without pain and distress is usually not cause for concern.

If you believe an infant is constipated, check for the following

- If your baby is bottle fed, ensure the formula is made up correctly.
- In warm weather bottle fed infants may require extra fluid such as cooled, boiled water between formula feeds. Breastfed infants may require more frequent breast feeds.
- Ensure the use of solid foods are age appropriate. Be aware that excessive use of legumes and high fibre cereals is inappropriate in young infants.

What To Do Next

If you have checked all of the above suggestions and the problem persists, consult your General Practitioner or Paediatrician.

Please Note

Prune juice contains a natural bowel irritant and is not recommended for infants under 9 months of age, even when diluted.

Adding any form of sugar, malt extract or rice cereal to formula will not help the constipation.

The introduction of solids early is not recommended as a treatment for constipation.

