

What to do when your child ISN'T feeling poopy

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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It's a topic that might be tough to talk about with your pediatrician – or anyone else for that matter. It's even tougher for your child if they're not... you know... *going*.

Believe it or not constipation in children is common. If your child has infrequent bowel movements or hard, dry stools, count them among that group.

Pediatric Gastroenterologist Dr. Sandeep Gupta with OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois in Peoria says a good rule of thumb for kids is to go at least once a day, but not less than every other day. If your child's stools are big and hard, they are skipping a lot of days, they are soiling, or their belly looks big, those are indications they might be constipated.

SOT Dr. Sandeep Gupta – Pediatric Gastroenterologist – OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois

(They have plenty of stool, they just want to hold it. And this usually begins when you go from nursing to formula, or when you start table food, or when you start regular milk, or when you start toilet training or there is a social issue like new house, new family, new location, new school, they start holding their stool. They just hold it in and when it comes out it's big and hard and painful and the cycle goes on and on. :27)

V/O: So what's a parent to do if their child won't go? Dr. Gupta says start by encouraging your child to sit on the toilet twice a day, after breakfast and after supper for 5-10 minutes.

SOT Dr. Sandeep Gupta – Pediatric Gastroenterologist – OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois

(Put a stool under them so their knees are square and feet are flat and they're not hanging in the air. And no books, games or toys at that time or they forget why they are there. So after breakfast and after supper sit on the toilet. But also be aware there are other diseases that can mimic constipation so if things don't look right reach out to your pediatrician and if need be they can reach out to the GI doctor then. :20)

V/O: To help, make sure you're feeding your child a well-balanced diet with plenty of liquids. When they are old enough to chew, have them eat fruit rather than just the juice because the fruit naturally has fiber.

Learn more tips to help your child at [OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois](https://www.osfhealthcare.org/childrens-hospital-of-illinois).