



Southport and  
Ormskirk Hospital  
NHS Trust

## **ADVICE FOR PARENTS**

# **Constipation in Infants & Children**

Paediatric A&E

When your child is constipated you may find he/she has difficulty in passing hard bowel motions less frequently than he/she normally does.

A child who has difficulty or discomfort when attempting to evacuate the bowels can try to prevent bowel emptying, thus beginning a vicious cycle.

## **WHAT CAN CAUSE CONSTIPATION?**

- Any cause of dehydration may produce constipation in babies, eg over-concentrated bottle feeds, excess sweating caused by fever, excessive clothing or exposure to high temperature. Passing one hard stool (poo) often makes children “hold on” next time, making the situation worse.
- The older child who is eating a low fibre diet may also suffer from constipation.
- Not drinking enough
- Potty training
- Not exercising
- Stress/anxiety
- Ignoring the urge

## **TREATMENT OF CONSTIPATION IN INFANTS**

You should:

- ✓ Check that the bottle feeds are made up correctly, according to the manufacturer’s instructions.
- ✓ Give cooled, boiled water or possibly with the addition of squeezed orange juice, or well diluted unsweetened pure

fruit juice.

- ✓ Give fruit/vegetable purees to infants over six months.
- ✓ Drink more fluids inbetween feeds.
- ✓ Massage tummy.

## **INFANTS OVER SIX MONTHS AND CHILDREN**

You should:

- ✓ Give your child high fibre foods such as Weetabix, wholemeal bread, fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh orange juice.
- ✓ An excellent food for providing high fibre intake in children beyond the age when small pieces of food are at risk of being inhaled, is popcorn.
- ✓ Increase activity

**CONTACT YOUR GP IF YOUR CHILD'S CONDITION  
DOES NOT IMPROVE**

**A&E Telephone: 01695 656674**  
**NHS 111**

*Please retain this leaflet for future reference*

**Please call 01704 704714 if you need  
this leaflet in an alternative format**

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Email [soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net](mailto:soh-tr.appointments@nhs.net)

Please remember to complete the **attached** *Friends and Family Test*.

Alternatively, you can complete the *Friends and Family Test* on-line by going to: [southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT](https://southportandormskirk.nhs.uk/FFT)

**Thank you**

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