



# Treatment of Constipation

## Guidelines for children over 18 months

Constipation is common in children and is often associated with poor eating habits. It may be easily prevented or remedied by improving the child's eating pattern and including each day:

1. Sufficient fluids to drink is very important.
2. Foods from each of the food groups, e.g. milk, cheese and yoghurt; cereals, bread and rice; meat and fish; fruit and vegetables; butter and polyunsaturated margarine or oils.
3. High fibre foods that provide bulk in the bowel and help stimulate a bowel action.
4. Regular exercises such as walking, running, outside games or sport to stimulate the muscles of the bowel.
5. A regular time to go to the toilet to encourage emptying of the bowel e.g. just after breakfast, after main meals, or a warm bath in the evening.

## High Fibre Foods

The following are fibre-containing foods and need to be provided in your child's usual diet. If your child is not used to having these foods, you may need to introduce them gradually as snacks, in place of sweets, sweet biscuits, cakes and soft drinks. High fibre foods are good for all members of the family and include the following:

- High fibre cereals, such as Shreddies, Weetabix, All bran, Porridge or Muesli;
- Wholegrain bread and biscuits;
- Wholemeal flour in home cooking;
- Brown rice and wholemeal pasta;
- Fresh fruit with skins left on where possible;
- Dried fruits such as sultanas, apricots or prunes;
- Fresh vegetables with the skins left on where possible (for example jacket potatoes).

## Fluids

Children need to take drinks of juice or water to school. They should be encouraged to drink frequently during the day. Milk drinks should be restricted to twice daily only, that is morning and evening, as it could aggravate constipation.

Eating the right foods, drinking sufficient fluids, regular exercise and regular toileting will help remedy and prevent constipation

## Contact

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