

## CONSTIPATION

Constipation is the passage of hard and less frequent stool. Passage of hard stool can be painful and difficult, causing stress or anxiety and eventual withholding. Please refer to the Bristol stool chart. The desired stool consistency is Bristol type 3 or 4 every day or two. Bristol type 1 (looks like rabbit poop) and 2 stools can break off, therefore not completely empty the rectum (where poop is stored). If constipation persists for a few months, the rectal muscle tone can stretch and sensory cues may be lost. The child may withhold and have overflow diarrhea or 'sneaky poops'.

- Book with your doctor for advice and follow up.
- Treatment: Ensure your child is getting adequate fluids and fiber in his/her diet.
- Refer to fluid and fiber chart. Encourage your child to sit comfortably on the toilet (+/-feet on a stool) for 5-10 minutes 15-30 minutes after a meal.
- #1 osmotic laxative is PEG 3350 (Laxaday, Restoralax, Miralax).
- PEG 3350 draws fluid into the bowel and is NOT absorbed. It is safe to use for months and even years on advice of your doctor.
- Your child may also need behavior modification if there is anxiety around toileting.

### Links to resources and webcasts:

- [www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-constipation-in-babies-and-children.pdf](http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-constipation-in-babies-and-children.pdf)
- [www.gikids.org/content/50/en/constipation](http://www.gikids.org/content/50/en/constipation)
- <http://www.uptodate.com/contents/constipation-in-infants-and-children-beyond-the-basics>