

## Tips to Prevent and Treat your Child's Constipation

It is very important that your child takes their medicines as prescribed by their GP. However it is just as important that they have good toileting habits to stop them becoming constipated.

Here are some tips which may help:

- Start a toilet routine- encourage your child to try and poo at regular times. The best time to try is 20-30 minutes after each meal for five minutes, or before bedtime.
- Make sure breakfast is offered early enough in the morning to allow for time afterwards, to sit on the toilet before your child leaves the house. This is especially important if your child does not like using the toilet out with their own home.
- Give your child plenty of time to do a poo- don't rush them
- Sit on the toilet the right way- see the description over the page
- Make going to the toilet fun by keeping special things just for the toilet, such a favourite book or blowing bubbles or a game on a tablet
- If your child says it hurts to poo, tell them to stop trying and try again later
- Watch for any change in your child's behaviour before soiling, noting places and times. Some children might hide in a corner for example. If they show these signs, then take them to the toilet even though they may refuse to sit on it- never force them to sit on the toilet
- If your child uses a potty or insists on doing a poo in their nappy, then make sure they still do this in the bathroom
- Let your child help with emptying the potty in to the toilet or to flush it away
- Slowly encourage them to sit on the toilet- even wearing their nappy or pants at first
- Teach your child how to clean themselves and wash their hands- make it fun. Nice smelling wipes and soap may help
- Encourage your child to gets lots of active play to increase bowel movement
- Increase your child's fluid and fibre intake (see Increasing Fibre & Fluids sheet)
- Give lots of praise for making small steps forward. An instant reward system/ chart may help i.e. a sticker for sitting on the toilet or for doing a poo.
- Keeping up the routine is important. The toilet routine should continue at school, on holiday, on outings etc.

## Correct Position for Opening Bowels

- Have a foot rest to make the knees higher than the hips
- Lean forwards with elbows resting on the knees
- Gently push



## Useful Websites

### **ERIC (the children's bowel and bladder charity)-**

<https://www.eric.org.uk/>

<https://www.eric.org.uk/how-to-prevent-constipation-in-children>

Provide practical tips and information including fun quizzes, activities and games for kids.

### **Bladder and Bowel UK**

<https://www.bbuk.org.uk/>

Useful resources and a helpline

### **NHS-**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/pregnancy-and-baby/constipation-and-soiling/>

General information and advice on constipation

### **NCT-**

<https://www.nct.org.uk/baby-toddler/your-babys-health/what-watch-out-for/constipation-babies> For information for constipation in babies