



### **What is constipation?**

When your child is constipated, your child may:

- Have a hard time having a bowel movement (BM).
- Have a painful BM.
- Go 3 or more days without a BM.
- This could happen because your child:
  - Does not eat enough fiber.
  - Drinks or eats too many milk products.
  - Does not drink enough liquid.
  - Does not get enough exercise.
- Remembers painful BMs. That can make some children hold back.

### **How can I take care of my child?**

*For babies less than 1 year old:*

- If your baby is over 2 months old, give fruit juices (such as apple or pear juice) twice a day.
- If your baby is over 4 months old, you can add strained, high-fiber foods twice a day. Cereals, apricots, prunes, peaches, pears, bananas, apples, beans, or peas are good fiber foods.

*For children over 1 year old:*

- Feed your child fruits or vegetables at least 3 times a day.
- Give more foods rich in bran and fiber. Try bran flakes, bran muffins, shredded wheat, graham crackers, oatmeal, brown rice, or whole wheat bread. Breads should have at least 3 grams of fiber per slice. Check the fiber content of cereals and other foods. Avoid highly processed foods, such as white bread and rice.
- Decrease the amount of milk products (such as cow's milk, ice cream, cheese, and yogurt) to 3 servings per day.
- Increase the amounts of 'P' fruits (pears, plums, prunes, peaches), citrus fruits and vegetables. Avoid bananas and applesauce.
- Prepare wholesome foods for your child that are well-balanced. Do not give in to your child's wishes and only give him/her what they will eat. Children will not starve themselves.

*For children who are toilet trained:*

Have your child sit on the toilet for 10 minutes after meals. This will help your child have a BM every day.

**If a change in diet does not solve the problem begin the following:**

- Over-the-counter Miralax 1-2 times a day as needed for 1-2 soft stools per day.
- If your child is having difficulty passing a hard stool, you may insert an age appropriate glycerin suppository high in the rectum to facilitate a bowel movement.

If doing this does not result in passage of stool, call for further instructions.