

This booklet is part of a series for children with bowel and/or bladder problems.

The booklets give a simple explanation of the problems the child is having. They give practical advice about how to help.

Titles of other booklets currently available in this series:

'Talk about going to the toilet'

'Talk about bedwetting'

'Talk about daytime wetting'

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June Rogers MBE

Bladder and bowel UK Paediatric Continence Assessment

Illustrations

Les Eaves

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Talk about Constipation



This book has been designed to help young children understand about constipation and soiling (having poo accidents in your pants). It explains why it happens and what can help things get better.

It is important to remember that if a child is soiling they may have been constipated for many months without anyone knowing.

This problem can be helped. Treatment often takes a while to work. It should be continued for a long time (often more than 12 months) to stop it happening again.

Further information is available from:

Bladder and Bowel UK

Disabled Living

Tel: 0161 607 8219

Email: bladderandboweluk@disabledliving.co.uk

Website: www.bladderandboweluk.co.uk

Bladder and Bowel UK, working under the umbrella of Disabled Living, provides impartial advice and information regarding resources, products and services for children and adults with bladder and bowel problems

Where does poo come from?

Everybody needs to poo and wee. All your friends, your mum and dad and even famous footballers, and pop stars.

When we eat there is always some part of the food that our body doesn't need. Our body gets rid of this part of the food. That is our poo!



Poo wants to get to the **toilet!**

What is 'constipation'?

Constipation means that you are not doing enough poos, or that your poo has become hard, which can make it difficult to push the poo out. We need to do at least 3 poos every week and they should be soft. Sometimes it is called 'Idiopathic Constipation'. That means the cause of the constipation is not known.

How does constipation happen?

Although we don't always know why it happens, we know what things make poo hard:

- Not eating enough fruit and vegetables
- Not drinking enough
- Not sitting on the toilet for long enough
- Putting off going to the toilet when we need to poo



There are **lots of things** you can do to **help things get better**

Why does the poo come out into my pants by itself?

When you get constipated the poo sits in your bottom, instead of coming out into the toilet. This poo gets bigger and harder and eventually 'wedges' open the top bit of your bottom. This top bit of the bottom normally acts as a 'special door', which keeps all your poo inside until you sit on the toilet!

There is also a bendy bit at the end of your bowel which helps to keep the poo inside. When you are constipated the poo sitting in your bottom keeps this bendy bit of your bowel straight, so that the squidgy poo higher up can squeeze past into your pants ('sneaky poo!').

This happens without you doing anything - so it is not your fault!



Try to do a **poo everyday**

How can I stop the soiling?

We need to get rid of the poo that is sitting in your bottom, as that is causing all the problems!

You can help this by:

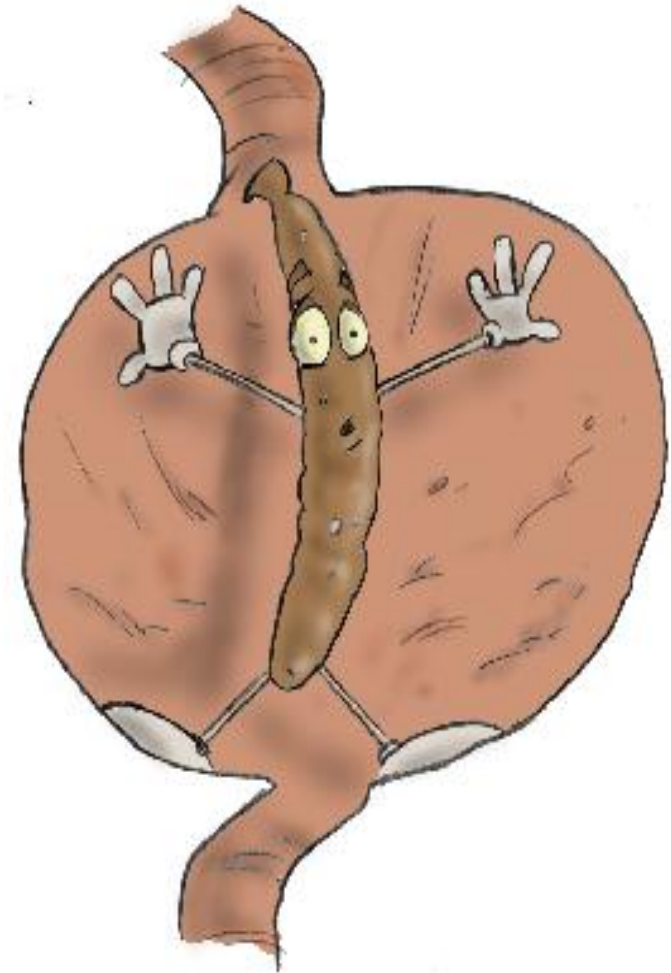
- Taking medicine called 'laxatives'
- Make sure you sit on the toilet regularly, try to do a poo everyday
- Sit on the toilet for about 5-10 minutes and try and 'push' the poo out
- Don't hold on if you feel you need to poo!
Go straight to the toilet
- Have 6-8 water based drinks per day
- Eat more fruit and vegetables
- Have lots of exercise



Constipation means that it is **difficult** for your **poo** to come **out!**

What else can I do to help?

- Decide which time of day is the best for you to sit on the toilet everyday and try and do a poo. After a main meal is best. You should sit on the toilet at the same time every day
- Keep a note of when you do a poo on the toilet so you can tell the person helping you to get better
- Tell someone if you know the poo has sneaked out.
- Work out with your mum, dad or carer (or whoever is looking after you) what you need to do with any pants that have 'sneaky poo' in them.



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Poo sometimes gets 'stuck' in your bottom

Further information

NICE has produced guidance regarding best practice in the assessment and treatment of idiopathic constipation in childhood. NICE made several recommendations including:

- Do not use dietary interventions alone as first-line treatment for idiopathic constipation
- Treat constipation with laxatives...
- Offer PEG 3350 + electrolytes (Movicol), as first line treatment

The following document has been produced specifically for families

CG99 Constipation in children and young people: understanding NICE guidance. This can be downloaded from:

<https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/CG99>



It is important to **talk** about the problem of **constipation** and **soiling**. Do **not** keep it a **secret**.