

Bowel Movements

In the first few days of life, your baby's stool will be thick and dark green or black. This is called meconium and must be eliminated before digestion can take place. Once meconium has passed, the stools will be yellow-green. It is normal for an infant's stool to change in color, softness, and frequency. Also, different babies have different bowel habits. Some have a stool with every feeding; others may have one stool every 36 to 48 hours.

The consistency and color of baby's stool can vary from day to day. Usually, breast-fed infants have liquid, yellow or mustard-colored stools which can be "seedy." If you are breastfeeding your baby, loose stools are not a sign of diarrhea. Stools of formula-fed infants are yellowish and loose also. All babies sometimes have green or brown stools. If you ever see blood in the bowel movement, please call the office.

As long as your baby is content, is eating normally, wetting diapers, and has no signs of illness, don't worry about minor changes in the stools. In addition, straining, grunting or turning red in the face while having a bowel movement can be normal.

Constipation is defined as hard stools, or no stool for 3 or more days. If the stools remain soft this is normal for your child, whatever the frequency. If you think your baby is constipated, please call us to discuss this problem.

Diarrhea is excessive water loss from the bowels. Diarrhea stools are excessively watery, frequent, and overflow the diaper. Normal infant stools can be runny; however, a sudden increase in frequency and liquid content of the stool may be diarrhea. Diarrhea can be caused by an intestinal infection, or a change in an infant's or Mom's (if she's nursing) diet. Diarrhea can lead to dehydration. If your infant has diarrhea, please call us. If your child is less than 2 months old and also has a fever please call us immediately.