

## HELPING THE SICK CHILD AT HOME

# CONSTIPATION

*This information does not replace qualified medical advice from your provider but can guide you on what you can do until regular office hours.*

Any change in bowel habits can be concerning, but it is rarely an urgent matter unless it is accompanied by fever, vomiting, abdominal distention, or if the stool changes color into cream/white, black, or red.

Constipation means that your child is having hard stools, which can either be very large and hard to pass or very small, like tiny rocks. Babies' stool patterns change frequently. As long as stools are soft, it is not necessary for babies to stool every day. In fact, some babies go once a week or less! Likewise, lots of babies grunt, strain, and turn red when they try to pass stool. This is also normal.

Some older children don't tell parents that they are constipated until it is very painful. It is important to ask your child about their stools frequently, even if it's embarrassing to them. Constipation is much easier to address when it is caught early.

### What you can do for older children:

- Prunes or prune juice are a natural laxative. If they dislike the taste, mix prune juice with apple juice
- Increase fiber and water intake.
- Do not give suppositories or laxative medication unless recommended by the physician

### What you can do for infants under 1 year:

- Call your pediatrician.
- Do not give suppositories or laxative medication unless recommended by the physician

*If these recommendations do not work or there is something else that worries you, please go to the nearest urgent care for a physician assessment. For emergencies, call 911.*