

Constipation Guide

Constipation is one of the most common childhood complaints and often one of the most overlooked. The good news is that diet, hydration, movement, and routine can make a significant difference without relying on medications.

HYDRATION FIRST

- Water is the single most important tool – aim for 4–6 cups per day depending on age
- Warm water in the morning on an empty stomach can help stimulate bowel movements
- Limit milk, juice, and sugary drinks which can slow digestion
- Coconut water is a gentle, hydrating option kids tend to enjoy

FOOD THAT HELPS

- **High-fiber fruits** – prunes, pears, apples (with skin), kiwi, and berries are especially effective
- **Vegetables** – broccoli, peas, carrots, and leafy greens
- **Fiber-rich grains** – oats, brown rice, quinoa, and whole grain bread
- **Legumes** – beans and lentils are fiber powerhouses; add to soups, pasta, or rice
- **Healthy fats** – avocado, olive oil, and flaxseed help lubricate the digestive tract

FOODS TO MINIMIZE

- Processed snacks, white bread, and fast food slow digestion
- Excess dairy (cheese, cow's milk) is a common constipation trigger in children
- Bananas (unripe) and white rice can be binding – opt for ripe bananas only

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SUPPLEMENTS & NATURAL SUPPORTS

- **Magnesium glycinate** — gentle and effective; helps relax the gut muscles
- **Probiotics** — a daily probiotic supports gut motility and regularity
- **Ground flaxseed** — 1 tsp mixed into oatmeal, smoothies, or yogurt daily
- **Aloe vera juice** — a small amount can gently support digestion

Always consult with your doctor before dosing.

MOVEMENT & ROUTINE

- Physical activity every day — even a 20-minute walk or outdoor play stimulates the bowels
- Establish a consistent bathroom time — after breakfast is ideal when the gut is most active
- Never rush or ignore the urge — encourage your child to sit on the toilet without pressure
- A footstool under the feet while on the toilet puts the body in a natural squatting position, which makes elimination easier

SLEEP & STRESS

- Poor sleep and stress are underrated contributors to constipation in kids
- A consistent bedtime routine supports the gut-brain connection
- Anxiety around using the bathroom (especially at school) is common — keep the conversation open and judgment-free

Consistency is key. If constipation persists for more than 2 weeks or is accompanied by pain, blood, or vomiting, consult your provider.