



# EIGHT THINGS TO BEGIN TODAY TO HELP YOUR CHILD'S CONSTIPATION

*Stop the cycle of seeing providers without seeing progress*

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## 1. POSITIVE OUTLOOK

A child who resists, fights, and cries during potty time is NOT going to be able to relax their pelvic muscles to be able to allow pee and poop out. Your child needs to be able to sit in the restroom calmly. The caveat? You need to be calm with them too. Stress, yelling, fighting, or crying all increase tension in the pelvic floor.



## 2. OPPORTUNITIES TO SIT

Sitting on the toilet in itself can help stimulate your child's parasympathetic nervous system (in charge of "resting and digesting!"). A 10 minute session on the toilet focused on relaxation and belly breathing might be enough to get your child's bowels and bladder cued in to do their job of emptying!

### 3. BELLY BREATHING

Belly breathing stimulates the bowel and bladder to do their emptying job. While relaxed (on the toilet, or not), take at least 10 big slow breaths that make your belly get big with each breath. This releases tension near the bowels, and stimulates the nervous system in charge of digestion and bowels!



### 4. USING REFLEX LOOPS

Reflexes are something our body does automatically (like pulling your hand away from a stove you didn't know was hot). Similarly, your body has reflexes that cause your body to desire to poop. 1) eating, 2) drinking something warm or a warm bath, 3) belly massage, 4) sitting on the toilet while doing belly breaths. Completed up to 3 times a day, within a 30 minute time period, this can help your child poop!

### 5. WATER INTAKE

Water in the digestive tract helps your child's poop stay softer, and thus easier to pass. Medications like Miralax pull existing water from the body into the poop, so if there isn't sufficient water in the body, it won't matter how much Miralax is given, if there isn't enough water in the body in the first place. Your child should be drinking approximately half of their body weight in ounces.





## 6. CONSIDER DIET

Highly processed foods, excessive carbohydrates, foods high in sugar, as well as dairy, can all contribute to constipation, and a slow, sludgy digestive system. Try to help your child eat a variety of colors throughout the day to keep their nutrition and fiber intake varied.

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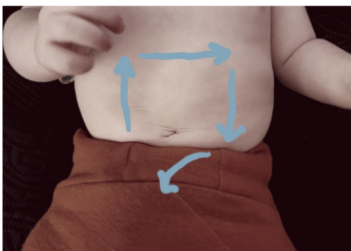
## 7. MOVEMENT HELPS

Physical activity keeps your child's body flexible and physically assists in pushing poop through the digestive system. The more flexibility the abdomen, the more flexible the digestive tract will be, which makes it work more efficiently. Strength in the abdomen, hips and legs are also needed for healthy toileting. Recommendations for sources vary, but >60 minutes of activity per day is a great place to start.



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## 8. BELLY MASSAGE



Follow the 'question mark' like you see in the photo. Pressure should be enough to push through muscle to get to the intestine, as your child relaxes their belly muscles. Your guiding words through massage should be "slow," "relaxing," and "firm." Don't push through pain. Get help from a pediatric pelvic floor physical therapist for more help!