

The 10 Commandments of Regularity

As you know, staying regular can be quite a problem for children. But following a few simple steps can be the key to keeping a normal, healthy digestive system.



1. Drinking plenty of water can help regulate constipation.
2. Encourage [high-fiber foods](#) such as whole-grains, fruits and vegetables.
3. Avoid giving your child large amounts of foods which could lead to constipation. Every child is different. Discuss dietary changes with your pediatrician.
4. Help your child set up a regular toilet routine.
5. For the younger child, reward them for attempting to have a bowel movement and for successfully having a bowel movement. ([Sticker charts, etc.](#))
6. Be attuned to your child's body and behavior. For instance, if a younger child exhibits symptoms like clenching buttocks or crossing legs, help them to the bathroom. If your child is soiling his underpants and hiding them in embarrassment, address the issue with your child in a sensitive manner.
7. Discuss your child's feelings with them in an empathetic manner. Children, at every age level, are embarrassed, scared, and maybe even angry about their situation. Make them feel like they are being heard, understood, and helped. Help them feel like they are in control by allowing them to be part of the development of a constipation management plan.
8. Parents should never show anger and frustration about the child's constipation to the child. Nor should the parent be overly obsessed with the child's bowel habits. These could be detrimental to the management of constipation and the well-being of the child.
9. If you notice any of the symptoms listed in "[How do I know if my child is constipated?](#)" contact your pediatrician as soon as possible. Do not wait for days to see if it will resolve on its own. The key to good management is recognizing the symptoms and addressing them before the situation worsens.
10. Encourage your child to be physically active. Exercise along with a balanced diet provides the foundation for a healthy, active life.

(adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics Guidelines)