

Toileting Tips

How to teach your child good potty habits

These tips will help your child to relax while going to the bathroom. This helps to keep the bladder healthy and free from infection.

Peeing (Urinary) Habits

It is important for your child to relax when peeing (urinating). This allows the bladder to empty completely. An empty bladder will not allow germs to grow in the urine. If germs are allowed to grow, they can lead to infections, such as a urinary tract infection (UTI).

Make sure your child is drinking enough water. Your child's pee (urine) should be pale yellow or clear if they are drinking enough water.

Tips to help your child relax when going pee:

- If your child is wearing pants or tights, remove them completely off 1 leg so that they have plenty of room to spread their legs open.
- Children may feel uncomfortable on adult toilets and want to get off the toilet quickly. Provide a step stool for their feet so they feel more stable. For younger children, use a potty chair.
- Your child should be sitting with their feet and knees wide apart (hip width).
- Have your child place their elbows on their knees. Have them lean forward so the pelvis is tilted. This position helps the pelvic muscles to relax.
- Ask your child to take slow, deep breaths.
- Have your child relax their head, arm, body and leg muscles like a rag doll.
- Have your child imagine urine flowing like a stream or a gentle garden hose.
- Turn on the water faucet. The sound of running water may help your child pee.
- Give your child plenty of time to pee. Relaxing and emptying the bladder can take from 3 to 5 minutes.
- Discourage screen time (video game, cellphone, tablet) while your child is in the bathroom. This may promote better focus when emptying their bladder.
- Your child should pee every 2 to 3 hours to help prevent urgent and unrelaxed trips to the toilet.

To Learn More

- Urology
206-987-2509
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Pooping (Bowel Habits)

It is best for your child to poop (have a bowel movement) every day. Encourage your child to take time to sit on the toilet after breakfast or dinner. Often, children who have a problem with infrequent and hard bowel movements (constipation) may also not be able to empty their bladders completely. It is best for your child to have a soft mashed potato consistency poop (stool) every day.

Check your child's diet. Some foods, such as dairy products, white bread and highly processed foods (like frozen or pre-made meals) can cause constipation. Encourage your child to drink plenty of water and eat foods rich in fiber.

High fiber foods are:

- Breads/cereals - multigrain bread, corn bread, whole wheat crackers, shredded wheat, bran muffins, raisin bran, brown rice, naan, teff (injera)
- Fruits - figs, dates, raisins, strawberries, melons, plums/prunes, pears, oranges, blackberries, guava, breadfruit, taro, avocado
- Vegetables and legumes - baked beans, refried beans, corn, peas, broccoli, yams, squash, green beans, cabbage, collard greens, lentils/dal, garbanzo beans, black-eyed peas, edamame/soybeans, seaweed
- Snacks - popcorn, nuts, seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, flaxseed, walnuts, chia), shredded coconut, granola
- For several more ideas, see our handout "High-Fiber Foods."
seattlechildrens.org/pdf/PE592.pdf

Who do I call?

If you have questions or concerns, please call the Urology Clinic to speak with a nurse at **206-987-2509**.