

HUNTINGTON PLAZA PEDIATRIC GROUP

THE MANY FACES OF POOP

Poop comes in many different shapes, sizes, colors, smells and even consistencies. As an infant, poop starts off as tarry black meconium. As a child's feeding improves and they receive more milk, the meconium is pushed out of the body and replaced by a transitional green colored poop, and then a yellow, mustard seedy one. These changes usually occur by day 3-5 of life. The yellow mustard seedy poop may be very watery and occur with every feeding, especially in breastfed babies. As your child gets older their poop may change color, consistency, smell and frequency depending on their diet, their mother's diet, and their own digestive system. It can be normal for young babies to poop 10 times a day or once a week.

The color, smell, consistency, and frequency of poop should not alarm you unless one of the following 4 things occurs:

1. Poop should not look black and tarry like meconium after the initial meconium has resolved. This may be a sign of digested blood in the stool. It is normal however to have very dark brown or army green stool, just not black and tarry.
2. Poop should not have bright red blood in it. This may be a sign of undigested blood in the stool.
3. Poop should not be pure water. This may be a sign of diarrhea. However, it is very common for infants to have very watery, seedy stools more than 10 times per day. As long as they are drinking and staying hydrated, it is normal.
4. Poop should not be as hard as a rock. This may be a sign of constipation. All babies strain and turn bright red when they poop. This is because they do not know what muscles to push to get the poop out so they strain to find the right ones. If the poop comes out soft they are not constipated.