

Good Bladder & Bowel Habits in Tamariki/Children

Whānau/Family Information – Public Health Nursing Service

Most tamariki/children are ready to begin toilet learning between 18 months and 3 years of age – some may be younger and some a little older. It is important to keep all toileting interactions positive and fun, with praise for all attempts. Children learn through play and role modelling.

Daily fluid intake

Tamariki/Children need to drink five to six cups of water each day (or replace some of the water with 1-2 cups of milk a day). Each day aim for:

1-4 years 1000 ml (1L) fluid
5-8 years 1200 ml (1.2L) fluid
9-13 years 1500 ml (1.5L) fluid

Drinking a full cup of water at regular intervals (ideally breakfast, mid-morning, lunch, mid-afternoon and dinner) helps the bladder to function properly. It will learn to fill completely and hold onto to a larger amount of wee before emptying. Drinking a full cup of water will also dilute the wee inside the bladder, helping to avoid irritation (which can lead to bladder spasm causing wees to leak).

If your child is not a good drinker start slowly. Begin with what they can drink and work up to six cups of water per day. It is important to remind your child to drink throughout the day, and ensure they take a drink bottle with them to school.

The best thing to drink is water.

Avoid fizzy, juice or other drinks that may contain caffeine as these drinks irritate the bladder and make it more difficult to hold on.

Good daytime bladder habits

When tamariki/children are drinking enough it is likely they will be able to hold on between trips to the toilet for 2 to 3½ hours and pass a good amount of wee.

If your child is unable to hold on, discuss this with your doctor.

Check your tamaiti (child) has a regular poo that is easy to pass

Healthy bowel habits (poos) are different for everyone, keep a check on your child's poo, it should be a type 4, soft and easy to pass at least four times per week. (*see picture overleaf*)

Ask your child if it is easy to do poos. If not, ensure they are drinking enough – five to six cups of water a day - as increasing their fluid can help them pass a soft poo.

Eating a diet containing fibre can also be helpful. Fibre-rich foods include fruit and vegetables, porridge, wheat or bran-based cereals, wholegrain breads, lentils/beans and bran muffins. See kidshealth.org.nz/constipation, scroll down to *how can I increase fibre in my child's diet?* for suggestions.

When constipation (hard poos) occurs, children/tamariki can become fearful of using the toilet due to pain when trying to poo. Constipation can also cause poo accidents (soiling) and daytime wetting.

If any of these symptoms are present, or if your child is not having a soft and easy to pass poo, please see your GP.

Toilet times for poos

It is important for tamariki/children to establish a regular toilet routine. This can be achieved by:

- Encouraging your child to sit on the toilet 20-30 minutes after a meal, for 3–5 minutes.
- Taking note of when your child usually does a poo and encouraging them to sit on the toilet at that time each day.
- Keep a check on your child's poo, it should be a type 4, soft and easy to pass, at least four times per week. If this is not the case, check in with your Practice Nurse/GP for advice.
- Doing a poo more than three times per day may not be healthy either. If it looks like Type 7, it could be diarrhoea or overflow. If it looks like Type 1-3 it may be constipation. If this is the case, please see your GP for further support.

For additional information and toileting advice visit:








<https://www.kidshealth.org.nz>

(search terms Toilet Training; Daytime Wetting; Bed Wetting; Constipation; Soiling)

<https://www.continence.org.nz>

(Continence Information – Children)

Modified BRISTOL STOOL CHART

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like pellets (hard to pass)
Type 2		Log shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a log but with cracks on the surface
Type 4		Like a log or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces, entirely liquid



Correct toilet position

- Sit on toilet
- Feet on stool
- Elbows on knees
- Back straight
- Push out your tummy

References

<https://www.bladderandbowel.org/>

www.cdhb.health.nz/health-services/public-health-nursing-service-phns

