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# Constipation in Children



## What is constipation?

It is the decrease in defecation per day or the roughness and hardness of the stool. Constipation is a common issue in children and is not a disease in itself and may be a [symptom of other diseases](#).

## What are the symptoms of constipation?

- Stool hardness.
- Less than [3 times](#) a week.
- Frequent pain in the abdomen or during stool .
- flatulence.
- Pain in the anal area and blood coming out on the stool.
- Trace of feces in the underwear of the child.



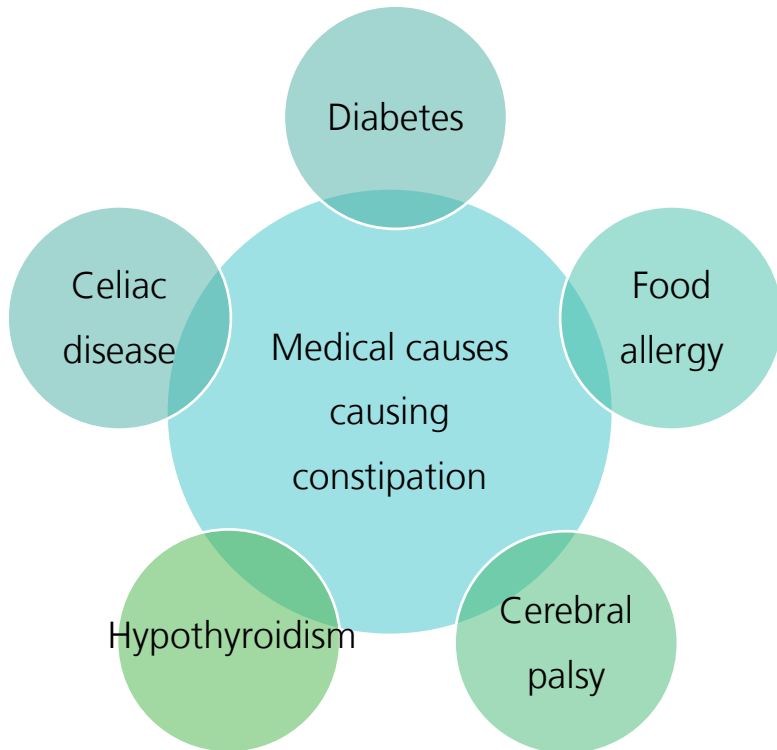
## What are the causes of constipation?

### ❖ General reasons:

- The child confined himself and ignored the desire to defecate because of his preoccupation with playing.
- Diet has changed due to lack of fiber, vegetables and drinking water.
- Early training in entering the bathroom.
- Change daily routines such as traveling, going to school for the first time, or the heat of the weather.
- Intestinal sensitivity to milk and dairy products or its excessive consumption.
- A family member is constipated, possibly genetic or due to environmental factors.
- Medications or supplements such as iron.

# What are the causes of constipation?

## ❖ Medical reasons:



## ❖ Surgical reasons:

- Congenital anomaly of the anus, such as advancing or narrowing of the anus.
- Hirschsprung's disease or narrowing of the intestines and rectum.

# What is Hirschsprung's disease?

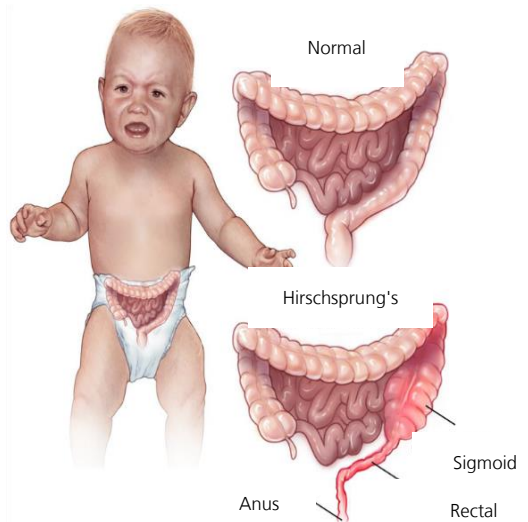
It is considered one of the most severe surgical diseases that cause severe constipation due to the lack of nerve formation in the rectum or large intestine, which causes obstruction and narrowing of the rectum or intestine.

## What are the complications of constipation?

Painful anal fissure

Anal rectal prolapse

Stool impaction



## What is the treatment for constipation?

- Treatment of constipation is by changing the diet by eating a lot of fiber and vegetables and encouraging him to drink water.
- Promote physical movement and play instead of sitting too much.
- Establish a routine to go to the toilet after eating large meals.
- Use laxatives with the advice of a specialist if the constipation is severe.



## **How is constipation diagnosed?**

Signs of the disease in the first months include delayed first defecation (meconium), flatulence, persistent vomiting and severe constipation or the diagnosis may be delayed due to the presence of persistent chronic constipation in some mild cases.

The diagnosis is made by enema dye ingestion and then taking a tissue sample from the rectum.

## **When is it preferable to visit a pediatric surgeon?**

After the failure of all methods to treat severe constipation and review with a gastroenterologist, who may recommend visiting the surgery clinic to do the necessary tests in the event of an anal fissure.









Sources and references:

All images used from Canva.com

Audit and Auditing:

The content of this booklet has been reviewed by the Pediatric Surgery consultants at King Fahd University Hospital.

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