

Diaper Decoder



GREENISH-BLACK AND STICKY

What it means

Meconium, which looks like licorice or tar, is the first stool after birth and is perfectly normal, healthy, and temporary. It is caused by bilirubin, a yellowish-green breakdown of red blood cells.

What to do

Check with your doctor if it lasts more than 3 days.



YELLOW AND SEEDY

What it means

Breastfed baby poop is bright yellow and mild-smelling and may come with loud, even explosive, side effects. This totally normal poop is the gold standard for babies. Breast milk has the ideal nutrients to help babies stay healthy and strong.

What to do

Be proud.



TAN AND THICK

What it means

This normal, healthy stool, which looks like hummus, is the byproduct of a diet that contains formula.

What to do

The only time to be concerned is if the poop becomes hard or is watery.



GREENISH-BROWN

What it means

This poop, which looks like leftover guacamole, may appear in the diaper after starting solid foods. This color is usually normal.

What to do

If your baby has other symptoms that concern you, contact your healthcare professional.



WATERY, BROWN AND LOOSE

What it means

The occasional loose stool is not a cause for alarm. But frequent, loud, loose stools that last two days or more could be diarrhea. **Diarrhea can cause dehydration, and also might a sign of infection.**

What to do

Give your baby plenty of fluids, or breastfeed often. **Do not give your baby antidiarrheal medication unless advised by your doctor.** He may recommend an electrolyte solution for rehydration.



DRY, BROWN AND HARD

What it means

Hard, pellet-like stools could mean constipation. Occasional constipation is normal, especially with formula-fed babies and during transitions to solid foods. It may be a sign that your baby isn't getting enough fluid, or may be losing fluid from the heat, illness, or fever.

What to do

For a very young baby, consult your healthcare professional. Give older babies lots to drink. Consider adding 1-2 ounces of prune or pear juice to the diet. If your baby is eating solids, offer higher-fiber foods, such as fruit, vegetables, and whole grains.



PINKISH RED

What it means

Once your baby has started on solids, you'll see bowel movements that vary in color and texture after every meal. Some medications can turn a baby's stool unusual colors. Foods known for turning baby poop shocking colors are carrots (orange) and spinach (green).

What to do

Watch what your baby eats to ensure there is a link between stool color and the food he eats. If your baby's stool is red for no apparent reason, call your healthcare professional.



DARK GREEN

What it means

A baby's stool that is dark green or greenish-black may be caused by a reaction of bacteria in the intestines to the iron sulfate in a supplement or iron-fortified formula. The poop will remain this color as long as your baby is on the formula.

What to do

Nothing. It's normal. Studies show that iron supplementation doesn't cause digestive problems or discomfort.



BRIGHT GREEN

What it means

Breastfed babies who nurse for short periods on each breast may receive more foremilk (sweeter and thinner) than hindmilk (richer and fatter). This sometimes results in bright green, frothy poop.

What to do

Try not to switch your baby to your other breast until you've nursed at least 20 minutes per side. If your baby is fussy or seems uncomfortable, contact your healthcare provider.



RED-STREAKED

What it means

Bright red blood on a hard baby stool could indicate small tears around the anus. Often the stools of constipated babies are streaked with blood or mucus from small tears in the anus caused by pushing.

What to do

Occasional bleeding isn't cause for concern. Usually, it will stop once the constipation has resolved. If the bleeding continues after softening of stools, or if there is more than a few drops of blood, contact your healthcare professional.



BLACK

What it means

Melena is a thick, black stool that could contain blood that entered the intestines in the upper portion of the digestive system.

What to do

If your baby has black poop that is not meconium (which passes during the first few days of life), call your healthcare professional immediately.



CHALKY WHITE

What it means

A chalky white stool could be a sign of a lack of bile, a digestive fluid made in the liver and stored in the gallbladder. Bile normally turns a stool brown. If your baby's liver doesn't produce bile, or if the bile is obstructed, his stool will be white.

What to do

A white stool is very rare. If your baby's stool is white, call your healthcare professional right away.

Contact your healthcare professional right away if you see:

- Blood or mucus in the stools
- Fever
- Vomiting
- Irritability
- Refusal to eat
- Decreased or dark-colored urine
- Decreased activity