Diaper Decoder

**What it means**
Mecconium, 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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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 electrolyte solution for rehydration.

**What it means**
Hard, pale-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.

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**What to do**
If your baby has other symptoms that concern you, contact your healthcare professional.

**What it means**
Sometimes poop is not what you expect, and could contain blood. Stools 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.

**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.

**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.

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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