

About Constipation

What exactly is constipation?

Put most simply, if you are going to the toilet less often than usual, it's probably constipation.

Poo – which your health professional may refer to as 'stools' or 'bowel movements' – may be hard, dry and difficult to pass, because it's lost water as it's passed through the bowel.

For children, there may be signs like:

- Pain in the tummy or bottom
- Finding it hard to have a bowel movement, or having one that really hurts
- Feeling you still want to go, even after you've passed a stool

What's faecal impaction?

A doctor or nurse may use this term when there hasn't been a proper bowel movement for several days – or even weeks.

It means the poo has been building up in your insides and becoming more and more difficult to get out.

Children with faecal impaction tend to have a dribbly bottom and often dirty their pants.

Faecal impaction needs to be confirmed by a doctor.



What is MOVICOL?

MOVICOL works in harmony with the body to gently bring on a natural bowel movement – unlike some other laxatives whose effects can sometimes be a little harsh.

How does it work?

Regardless of constipation's cause, the main effect is that poo becomes hard, dry and difficult to pass because of water lost during the long time it's been in the bowel.

MOVICOL works in a natural way, taking water straight to the dehydrated stool, where it's absorbed and retained. The effect of the water is to lubricate, soften and expand the poo – ultimately triggering an easy and comfortable bowel movement just like a normal poo.

The active ingredient in MOVICOL (called macrogol 3350) is virtually unabsorbed by your body.

How long will it take?

Because of the gentle, natural mode of action, it can take a day or so after starting MOVICOL before you have your first bowel movement. But it will be a predictable and comfortable one, in harmony with the way your body works.

How do you take it?

- MOVICOL comes in sachets and is a white powder that you need to mix with the correct amount of water. Stir it well until dissolved (the water becomes clear again, even for MOVICOL chocolate).
- MOVICOL can then be taken as is, but if desired you can add cordial to the mixed solution (for any MOVICOL flavour).

If your health professional has recommended MOVICOL, they have probably advised you about how much to take and for how long. Otherwise please use the chart and table opposite as a guide.

How many sachets, for how long?

Chronic or occasional constipation

RECOMMENDED STARTING DOSE#
ADULTS and CHILDREN >12 years: 1 full strength sachet daily
CHILDREN 2-5 years: 1 half strength sachet daily
CHILDREN 6-11 years: 2 half strength sachets daily

Doctors may adjust the starting dose according to individual requirements

After one or two days of treatment refer to the Bristol Stool Chart overleaf to assess consistency of the stools and adjust dosage up or down

STILL CONSTIPATED? No stool, or Type 1 or 2	NORMAL BOWEL MOVEMENT? Type 3 or 4	LOOSE/WATERY STOOLS? Type 5, 6 or 7
Increase number of sachets*	Maintain dosage	Reduce dosage, or stop (Type 7)

*Up to 3 full strength sachets for adults or 4 half strength sachets for children under 12 years

In medically diagnosed faecal impaction

- These dosage rates apply only up until 'disimpaction' (a bowel movement) has happened.

Number of MOVICOL sachets per day - Half Strength

AGE	DAY 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2-5 years	2	4	4	6	6	8	8
6-11 years	4	6	8	10	12	12	12

Number of MOVICOL sachets per day - Full Strength

AGE	DAY 1	2	3
Adults and children > 12 years	8†	8†	8†

†8 sachets need to be taken within 6 hours

While you're taking this medicine

You may get very soft poo

Don't worry – soft stools mean MOVICOL has started to work.

However, if the poo becomes very runny or diarrhoea (see Stool Type 7 on the chart in this leaflet), you should stop taking your medicine until the runny poo stops. Then start again using fewer sachets.

If there's anything you're unsure about, please contact your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with the medicine.

Keep a record of your bowel movements

Keeping track of how often you or your child pass stools – and what they're like – can help in future.

Use the Stool Chart overleaf to recognise the type of stool passed and enter the corresponding number in your Stool Diary (also overleaf) along with how much MOVICOL was taken. Then take the completed diary to your doctor or nurse on your next visit.



Other things that can help

- Sit on the toilet regularly, for example for 5 minutes after each meal
- If you want to go to the toilet, go immediately – don't hold on
- Drink more water than usual (around 6 to 8 glasses per day) unless on a fluid restricted diet
- Eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day
- Do some kind of exercise every day

The correct position for opening your bowels

- 1 Knees higher than hips
- 2 Lean forward and put elbows on your knees
- 3 Bulge out your abdomen and straighten your spine
- 4 CORRECT POSITION

 - ✓ Knees higher than hips
 - ✓ Leaning forward with elbows on knees
 - ✓ Bulge out your abdomen
 - ✓ Straighten your spine

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