McMaster Children's Hospital

Is my child having healthy bowel movements?

Compare your child's bowel movements (stools) with the pictures in this chart. Healthy bowel movements are soft and easy to pass.

Bristol Stool Chart

Constipation

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)	Hard and difficult to pass
Type 2		Sausage-shaped, but lumpy	
Type 3		Like a sausage, but with cracks on its surface	Soft and easy to pass
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft	
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily)	
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool	Loose or watery
Type 7		Watery, not solid pieces. **Entirely liquid.**	

Diarrhea

Goal:	✓ 1 or 2 soft bowel movements a day. ✓ Bowels are completely emptied. ✓ No pain or straining with bowel movements. ✓ No stool leakage.

The Bristol Stool Chart was developed by Heaton, K. and Lewis, S. at the University of Bristol in 1997.

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