



The Scoop on Baby Poop: 0-6 Months

by Jill Kelsey

One of the best metrics for health is the quality of a bowel movement. Everybody poops! If they don't, grave problems occur. As a new parent, you definitely want to be informed in this area. So, how do you know if your baby has healthy poop? Read on for the scoop.

Newborn Poop

What's normal?

Newborn Poop: A newborn can have from 1 soft poop per feeding to 5-7 total poops per day. (Mayo Clinic)

Newborn Pee: 4-8 times per day (Note the color and frequency as darker or infrequent urination could potentially indicate dehydration.) Pee can be tinged pink, green, or orange and will increase in frequency due to increasing milk supply in the first three days. (1)

Baby's very first poop is known as "meconium." Meconium forms in the fetus during pregnancy. It mainly consists of fetal secretions and cellular debris like skin, gastrointestinal secretions, and hair. It also includes lanugo, mucus, amniotic fluid, bile, and water. (2) Meconium has a sticky, tar-like texture and is very dark olive green-gold. It does not smell very much. (3) Ideally, it is passed within a few minutes of birth and may continue for a few days. Sometimes, in post-term pregnancies that go past 37 weeks, there is a risk of the fetus passing the meconium in utero, which poses significant health problems for both mom and baby.

Newborn Poop (cont.)

As the meconium passes, the stool will become lighter in color, first becoming more yellow-green and then a light yellow shade, depending on whether the infant is breastmilk or formula-fed.

If your baby is female, it is also not uncommon to notice a light period-like discharge in the first few days. This results from the baby girl processing her mother's hormones, which can still be present in her body after birth. The discharge is of little concern but may be surprising if you are not expecting it. More on this later.

Note: If a newborn fails to pass their meconium, it is a sign that something may be wrong. Failure to pass meconium is a symptom of diseases like cystic fibrosis or Hirschsprung disease. It is also a possible symptom of meconium plug syndrome (MPS), a malformation, or neonatal bowel obstruction. One in 500 live births has a functional immaturity of the colon.

Warning Signs (4):

- Distended abdomen
- Failure to pass stools within the first 24 hours
- Vomiting

Mothers who have Diabetes, preterm infants, or receive treatment for eclampsia, preeclampsia, or preterm labor with magnesium sulfate have a higher risk of a baby being born with MPS. However, in those infants with MPS, between 10-40% of these infants, it is a result of Hirschsprung disease.

Breast-Fed Infant Poop

What Is Normal?

Color: Yellow, compared to shades of mustard

Consistency: Seedy and loose

Smell: Light inoffensive

Frequency: 1-3 poops per week and 4-8 pee per day

The poop of a breastfed-only baby is typically yellow, seedy, and has very little odor. Of course, there will be a smell, but it is distinct and not all that offensive, more like a body odor or baby pheromone smell. (Nasty fact: Even mother dogs eat their pup's waste now. Yes, gross, but true. Dogs continue to consume the poo and pee until the pups begin eating solid foods.)

Bubbly or frothy stools may indicate that the baby is getting too much foremilk. Breastmilk contains foremilk (fattier) and hindmilk (watery). Achieve a feed with balanced fore and hind milk consumption by nursing from one breast until it empties fully and alternate breasts with each feeding session. If this does not resolve the problem, consider pumping from the breast a little before offering the breast to the baby to allow for greater access to the hindmilk. Foremilk provides fatty hunger relief, while hindmilk provides a thinner thirst quench.

Warning Signs?

- Lack of at least one poop per week. (Breastmilk is a clean food source and does not typically result in much waste as it is readily absorbed and nutrient-dense.)
- Hard stools
- Red or bloody stools

Formula or Combination-Fed Poop

What Is Normal?

Color: yellow, tan, light brown with hints of green tone

Consistency: creamy and slightly firmer than breastfed babies (peanut butter consistency)

Smell: Fairly strong smell but not as bad as babies fed solids

Frequency: 1-4 poops/day and 1 pee about every three hours depending on intake (minimum of 4 pee/day)

Babies Who Eat Solids

What Is Normal?

Color: Color varies based on the foods consumed (e.g., shades of browns, greens, or blueish with berries)

Consistency: More solid stools with small pieces of consumed food

Frequency: 1-2 poops/day on average but breastfed starting solids may see a slight increase in poops, while formula-fed infants starting solids may see a reduction in frequency as much as 1 poop every other day (5)

What Is Important?

- Baby is steadily gaining weight (although it is not uncommon for a newborn to first lose weight and regain it the first month)
- Baby is having at least one poop per week.
- Baby's poops are creamy/soft texture, not hard and pellet-like, indicating adequate hydration
- Baby is making progress in learning how to poop (you will notice funny "poo faces") and can pass the poop without straining or sharp shrieking sounds that can be an indication of constipation or pain

Overall Warning Signs

- Frothy poop can indicate an allergy or infection if occurring in conjunction with other symptoms like kicking, crying, gas, arched back, or other discomfort within 30 minutes of feeding. These symptoms could potentially indicate lactose intolerance ([6](#))
- No poops or fewer than one poop per week or fewer than 4 wet every 24hrs., especially if urine is smelly, dark or pink, orange, or red and the baby is not feeding ([7](#))
- White, grey, red, or bloody poops
- Hard, dry rabbit-like poops (can indicate dehydration)
- High-pitched sharp cries (indication of pain)
- Frequent very watery poops (diarrhea and risk of dehydration)
- Sunken in soft spot (fontanelle) on the top of the head (indication of dehydration)
- A rectal temperature above 100.4F/38C under 3mo., or 101F/38.3C if older than 3mo.
- Yellowing of the skin or eye whites (indication of jaundice)
- Very foul-smelling loose poop that may contain mucus (potential allergy)

Allergy Note: Very rarely, a baby may be born with a genetic predisposition for lactose intolerance. The predisposition occurs when both parents contain a genetic mutation on the LCT gene. ([8](#))

Infant Girls: Some infant girls may have a false period at about 2-10 days old that lasts for 3-4 days. ([9](#)) Vaginal bleeding occurs due to a physiological progesterone withdrawal that is a result of the mother's hormones. It is normal, but mention it to your pediatrician as it could indicate other conditions for which your pediatrician can check. False menarche occurs in about 0.8% of preterm infant girls, 3.8% of full-term female infants, and about 9.1% of post-term infants.

Lifestyle Best Practices

It is helpful to use a charting tool to keep track of your baby's feedings, poops and pees, and diaper changes. If there is a pattern, you can quickly see what is normal for your child. However, not all babies will follow a pattern, and they will consistently surprise you. We are continually updating tools and charts that you can download from the members area. Additionally, much to every parent's chagrin, you will have the occasion when you change the diaper, and they will immediately soil the diaper as soon as the clean one is on. Or worse, your baby experiences a blowout.

Dealing With Diaper Blowouts

Blowouts will happen. An infant has a very long butt crack, and sometimes the poopies will shoot straight up the crack and spread all over your baby's back. Other times, the poop will blast out of one or both leg holes in the diaper to land all over the legs. Reduce these mishaps by ensuring your baby is wearing the right-sized diaper. The diaper should lie flat and snug (but not too snug) around the waist and leg holes. Confirm the edges form a smooth seal, as spaces and holes in the seal allow leaks. Pull the baby onesie down toward the baby's bottom when you encounter the blowout (because it is inevitable). The general design of any onesie allows for this downward direction of movement. I suggest transferring the baby to a bath if they have a blowout, but if that is not possible, you can place an open, clean diaper lined with baby wipes under your baby. While holding the baby's feet with one hand, use the poop-free front inside area of the diaper to wipe up as much of the mess as possible with the first swipe from front to back; this will help reduce the follow-up cleanup. Follow up with a wet towel or wet wipes. Spot clean with any of the baby wipes covering the clean diaper and secure the new diaper. Place soiled clothing in a "wet bag" or smell-proof bag of some sort (if traveling), or soak immediately in warm water with a mild detergent if at home until you can launder it.

Lifestyle Best Practices (cont.)

Tip: Keep extra clothing, wipes, and diapers in the car (in addition to your diaper bag). Change the diaper more frequently if needed. Try to detect patterns in your baby's bowel movements and plan accordingly. They may poop 15 minutes after a meal, when their first wake up, after tummy time, or at other times, for example. Overlapping car-seat time and an average poop time is inviting a disaster.

Constipation

Constipation can occur during diet transition points, like when transitioning from breastmilk to formula or solids. In older children, constipation can occur during potty training or in situations where the child is uncertain of the environment and may be holding their poop in on purpose. Constipation may also occur at any age when the child is not drinking enough fluids, especially in warm weather or during illness where a fever or diarrhea may be present.

Older Children

According to the Mayo Clinic, these are the average bowel movements for those over six months of age:

- **6mo. - 1yr.** - About 2 poops per day
- **1yr. - 3yrs.** - 1-2 soft, snake-like/ banana-shaped poops per day
- **4yrs and older** - 1 poop per day

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