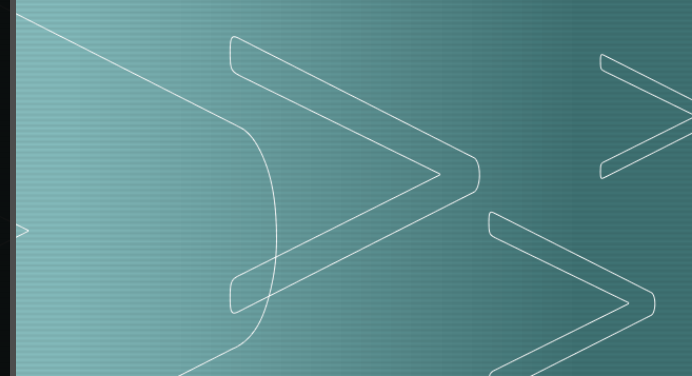


▸ The Scoop about Poop

What you should know



Why should you know this?

You may have heard about or studied information regarding the “Fatal Five”. Knowing about “poop” ties in with what you have learned about dehydration, constipation, and infections. For example:

- Having diarrhea can lead to dehydration. The consistency and even color of poop can give clues about this early.
- Constipation can lead to bowel obstruction as well as behavior issues and just plain not feeling well. Recognizing this early will help with timely treatment.
- A light-colored poop can give you clues that a liver or gallbladder issue is present rather than reflux or GERD when someone complains about abdominal pain.
- Different colors can indicate an infection.

By knowing what is normal and what is abnormal, you will be able to report problems earlier to medical providers, thus providing better care.

► Poop can tell a lot about health

A bowel movement is the last stop food makes as it goes through the digestive tract. Sometimes called stool or feces, poop is what's left of food and drink after the body absorbs important nutrients.

What and how someone eats affects the digestive system, and sometimes, bowel movements can change simply because of changes in diet. Other times, changes in bowel movements signify something more serious.

What's "normal" depends on each individual person — but there are some signs to look for that mean something may be off.

What is considered normal?

Normal bowel movements can vary for each person.

There are general guidelines to what is considered healthy:

- **Color:** Medium to dark brown
- **Smell:** Strong but familiar
- **Feel:** Painless, requiring minimal strain to pass
- **Texture:** Formed or soft with clear-cut edges that are easy to pass.
- **Frequency:** As often as 3 times a day or as little as 3 times per week

If someone's stool is different on a consistent basis, it may just be what's normal for the person, but it may be worth mentioning to a healthcare provider.

Color

Poop can vary a lot in color. Some colors are not healthy and should be reported to a health care provider.

▸ Pale poop color

Bile salts in the intestines give stool its usual brown color.

If stool color is light (either pale, white, grey, or clay-colored), there could be a lack of bile in the stool due to:

- A blockage of the bile ducts from gallstones
- A condition affecting your gallbladder, liver, or pancreas (hepatitis, gallstones, etc)

Stool may be pale after a barium enema test.



Steatorrhea

Poop that is pale or light-colored could also mean there is excessive fat in the poop—a condition called steatorrhea. This can be caused by anything that disrupts the intestinal lining, such as celiac disease or disorders that affect the pancreas, liver, or gallbladder.

- The stool may be pale or yellow as well as shiny or greasy, foul-smelling, or frothy.
- It may float in the toilet bowl.
- It often sticks to the side of the bowl and is difficult to flush away.



LIGHT-COLORED



FOUL-SMELLING



FLOATING/STICKING

Yellow color

There are different possible causes of yellow poop, and significance ranges widely.

- Yellow poop may simply mean that the diet is high in yellow food items such as sweet potatoes, carrots, turmeric, or yellow food coloring.
- People with GERD and those taking medication for GERD sometimes have yellow poop.

The sudden appearance of yellow poop can also be a sign of an infection that affects the intestines.



Green color



There are some common reasons for a green poop color:

- Eating lots of leafy vegetables like kale or spinach.
- Iron supplements, some antibiotics, and food coloring, including green, purple, and blue dye (often in drink mixes).
- Conditions that speed up intestinal activity, such as a bowel disorder or food poisoning.

People who are pregnant may also occasionally have green stools.

▾ Bright red

A bright red poop color can be caused by:

- Beets
- Cranberries
- Tomato juice or soup
- Products containing red food coloring, like Jell-O, Kool-Aid or red licorice.

Red medicines, such as amoxicillin, may also turn poop red.



Blood in poop



If there is blood in stool, the color depends on where the bleeding takes place in the digestive tract.

- Blood from the upper part of the gastrointestinal tract, such as the stomach or esophagus, will look dark by the time it exits the body as a bowel movement
- Blood that is bright red is more likely to come from the lower gastrointestinal tract, such as the large intestine or rectum and may be caused by conditions such as
 - Hemorrhoids
 - Anal fissures
 - Ulcerative colitis
 - Diverticulosis
 - Colon cancer

Black or dark color

Certain foods, supplements, and medications can temporarily cause a black poop color, such as:

- Bismuth subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol, Kaopectate)
- Iron supplements
- Activated charcoal supplements
- Dark foods, such as black licorice, grape juice, Oreo cookies, blackberries, blueberries

Stool can also appear darker with constipation. Dark green stool from bile that hasn't had time to break down may appear to have a black poop color in certain lighting.



▸ Consistency



Consistency and Form

The Bristol Stool Chart, developed in 1997 by researchers from Bristol, England, is used by medical professionals for clinical assessments.

By using the chart, stool can be monitored, and changes tracked.

It is important to note that there can be some natural variation in stool texture and shape from day to day.

The Bristol Stool Chart



Type 1 - Constipation
Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)



Type 2 - Mild constipation
Sausage-shaped but lumpy



Type 3 - Normal
Like a sausage, but with cracks on the surface



Type 4 - Normal
Like a sausage or a snake, smooth and soft



Type 5 - Lacking fibre
Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily)



Type 6 - Mild diarrhoea
Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool



Type 7 - Severe diarrhoea
Watery, no solid pieces (entirely liquid)

▸ Bristol Stool Chart - Constipation

Type 1



Separate hard
lumps, like nuts

Type 2



Sausage-shaped
but lumpy

Stool types 1 and 2:
These types of stool are
hard, lumpy, and difficult
to pass. It can indicate
that an individual is
constipated and may be
dehydrated.

▶ Bristol Stool Chart - Normal

Type 3: Stool is a combination of solid and lumpy, but it is easier to pass than Types 1 and 2. It is considered normal and healthy.



Like a sausage or snake but with cracks on its surface

Type 4: Stool is smooth and soft and is considered the ideal type of feces. It is easy to pass and indicates a healthy digestive system.



Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft

Type 5: Stool is soft, but it has distinct edges. It can indicate that an individual might be lacking fiber but is still considered normal.



Soft blobs with clear-cut edges

▸ Bristol Stool Chart – Diarrhea



Fluffy pieces with
ragged edges,
a mushy stool

Type 6: Mild diarrhea – mushy consistency with ragged edges



Watery, no
solid pieces

Type 7: Severe diarrhea – liquid consistency with no solid pieces

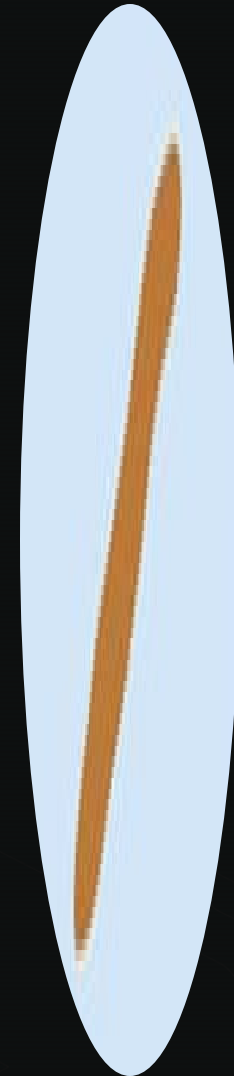
Diarrhea can be a sign of infection or a more serious underlying health issue.

Stool consistency – Pencil thin

Narrow, pencil-like stool: generally caused by the narrowing of the intestinal passage due to:

- Inflammatory bowel disease (Crohn's, Ulcerative colitis, etc.)
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Colon cancer
- Partial obstruction from a mass in the colon

A low-fiber diet and temporary infections may also be to blame.



Frequency

Having frequent bowel movements is a condition in which a person defecates more often than usual.

There isn't a "normal" number for bowel movement frequency.

Many healthcare providers agree that healthy bowel movement frequency can range from 3 times a day to 3 times a week.

The two main bowel movement conditions are:

- Constipation – fewer than 3 bowel movements per week
- Diarrhea – more than 3 movements of loose stools per day

THE SCOOP - ABOUT POOP



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Thank you
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