

## When pooping is a problem

Some kids who are toilet trained have problems pooping. This may be due to:

- **Poor posture.** Not sitting the right way.
- **Not relaxing.** Not knowing how to relax when they are on the toilet.
- **Timing.** Getting bored and not waiting long enough.

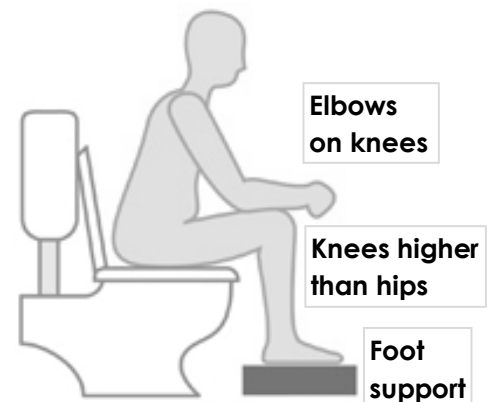
These can lead to problems when your child tries to poop.

### What is the right way to sit?

Your child should be in a squatting position. Feet should be flat on the floor or a step stool. Legs should be apart and elbows should be on the knees.

Having a routine may help. Have your child practice sitting on the toilet or potty chair 15 to 20 minutes after each meal and before bed.

Your child should sit for about 5 minutes at a time while on the toilet. Use a kitchen timer to keep track of time.



### What can I do to help?

- Be patient with your child. It takes time to learn to poop on the toilet. It does not happen in just a few days. It is best to work on this every day. If you skip a day, or give up, it could take a long time.
- Help your child relax. If your child is anxious:
  - Read a book or play with a toy for a short time.
  - Help your child learn to use their belly muscles to help pass stool. Have your child blow hard on one of the potty box toys like the pinwheel or bubbles. It should feel like a gentle push in the stomach. Growling like a lion might also work.
- Make a potty box. Include books and small toys that your child likes. Also put in toys that will make your child blow through the mouth. A pinwheel, kazoo, noise maker or bubbles are good options.
- Older children may use a hand-held electronic game. Be sure your child does not get too involved in the game and forget to pass stool.
  - These toys and games should stay in the bathroom for play only when your child is on the toilet.
- Give your child choices to help them feel more in control. Let them choose:
  - Which bathroom to use if you have more than one.
  - To sit frontwards or backwards on the toilet.
  - Which item from the potty box they will play with.

## Ways to help continued

- Use a sticker chart to have your child chart their progress. Keep the chart in the bathroom and praise their progress.
  - Each time your child sits on the potty without complaining, let them put a small sticker on the chart.
  - Each time your child poops in the toilet, let them post a large sticker.
  - You may want to offer a small reward when your child earns a set amount of large stickers.
- Teach your child that it is important to poop when they feel the urge even if they are not at home.

**ALERT:** Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

**This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.**