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Paediatric Bladder and Bowel Care Service Training and Education

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Nappy to Potty – A Parents Guide

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Paediatric Bladder and Bowel Service

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Setting the Scene

Dealing with continence problems in school and early year's settings can be difficult. Traditionally children were expected to be toilet trained before they could start in such provisions. However, toilet training is happening later now than in previous generations and schools report that increasing numbers of children are not toilet trained on admission.

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Did you Know?

In the UK an estimated

900,000
or
1 in 12, 5 - 19 year olds

suffer from bowel and bladder conditions such as bedwetting, daytime wetting, constipation and soiling. **(ERIC)**

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A New Milestone

Toilet training is like any other milestone your child's development.

A child will achieve success when he/she is physically ready. There should be no pressure to train your child unless the time is right.

A realistic age to begin to think about toilet training is between 18 mths – 3yrs old. Most show signs that they are ready between 2 and 3 yrs old.

REMEMBER: Every child is different!

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Ages and Stages

- By the age of 3yrs, 9 out of 10 children are dry during the day.
- By the age of 4yrs, **most** children are reliably dry.
- Between 4 and 5yrs, **most** children learn to stay dry at night.

However, there are some exceptions…
A delay in toilet training can happen for a number of reasons, including bladder or bowel problems, processing or sensory disorders, or disability.

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How will I know my child is ready?

It is not always easy to recognise signs of readiness. Toilet training works best when your child shows any of the following signs:

- Has a good level of understanding, the ability to follow instructions and communicate?
- Has the ability to sit on the potty/toilet?
- Has an awareness of feeling wet/dirty?
- Has no signs of constipation
- Can indicate when they need a wee?

The gap between wetting should be at least 1 – 1 1/2 hrs

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Healthy Bladders and Bowels

For toilet training to be successful it is important that you check whether your child has a healthy bladder and bowel. Ask yourself:

- Can they wee and poo without pain?
- Can they stay dry for at least an 1hr/1hr ½ between wees?
- Do they pass soft poos at least 4 times in one week?
- Do they consume sufficient drinks daily? **(At least 6 - 8 cups.)**

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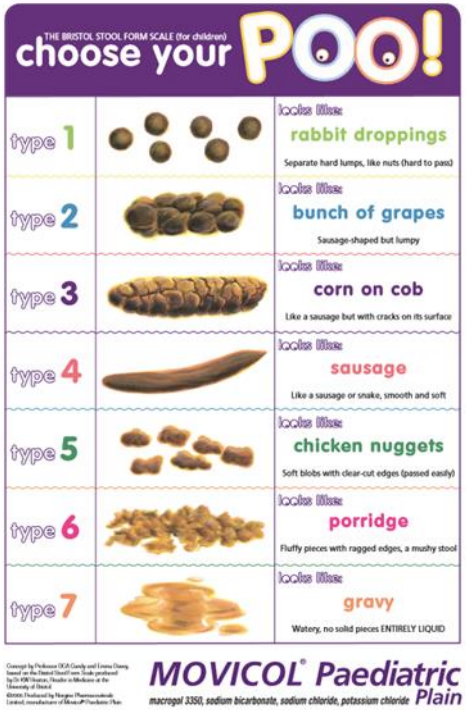
Bristol Stool Chart



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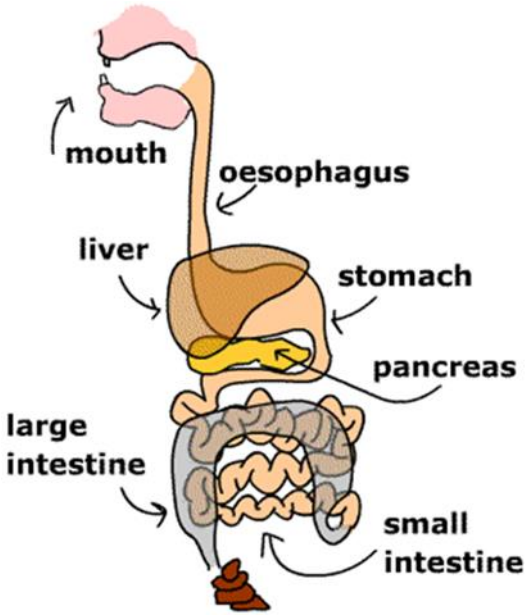
How a Healthy Bowel Works

The Poo Factory



- Once eaten and chewed food enters the **Stomach**
- The food then travels to the **Small Intestine** where the healthy nutrients re route to the rest of the body
- The remains travel to the **Large Intestine** where strong muscles help the poo to travel along The body soaks up the water content turning the poo into a smooth sausage shape.
- The poo reaches the **Bottom**, sending a signal to the brain to alert us that we need to visit the toilet to pass a poo.

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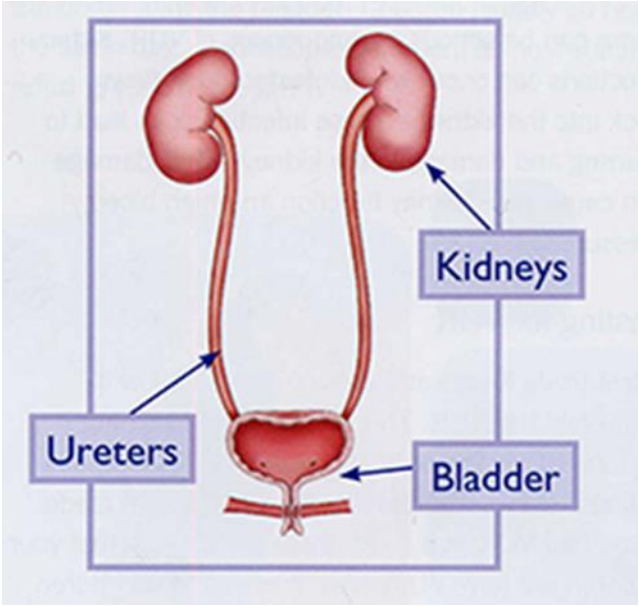
How a Healthy Bladder Works

The Wee Factory



- Like the body makes a poo after we eat/drink, it also soaks up the water and enters the bloodstream.
- Blood pumps through the **Kidneys** which filters out what it doesn't need – wee.
- Wee travels down the **Ureters** into the **Bladder**
- The **Bladder** is surrounded by muscle. It fills up with wee and stretches, sending a signal to the brain to alert us that we need to visit the toilet to do a wee.
- Wee travels out of the bladder through the **Urethra** and releases into the potty/toilet by relaxing the muscles.

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The Importance of Fluids

From being fully weaned it is important that your child starts to have drinks in a regular pattern throughout the day. Enough fluids consumed on a daily basis will allow the bladder and bowel to work efficiently and help to alleviate constipation.
Not only is drinking enough fluids during the day important for maintaining healthy bladder and bowels but it also aids concentration, good academic and sporting performance.

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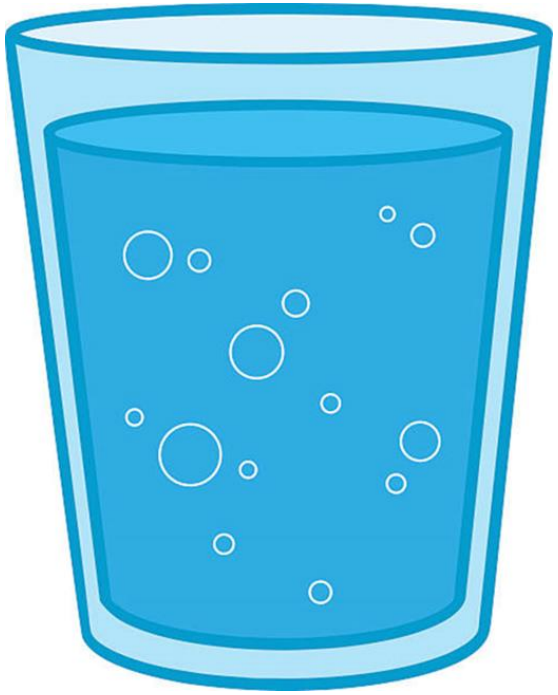
How Much?



- Encourage a water based drink with every meal and also another drink midway between meals.
- Milk intake to should not more than a pint a day.

Your child should consume at least…….
6-8 cups of drink per day

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A Good Drinking Routine

Be a good role model and build a routine where as a family you sit down at a table and have a complete cup of drink together. The following times would be considered best practice:

- Breakfast
- Mid Morning
- Lunch
- Mid Afternoon
- Tea
- One hour before bed

Any additional fluids are a bonus and should not be discouraged

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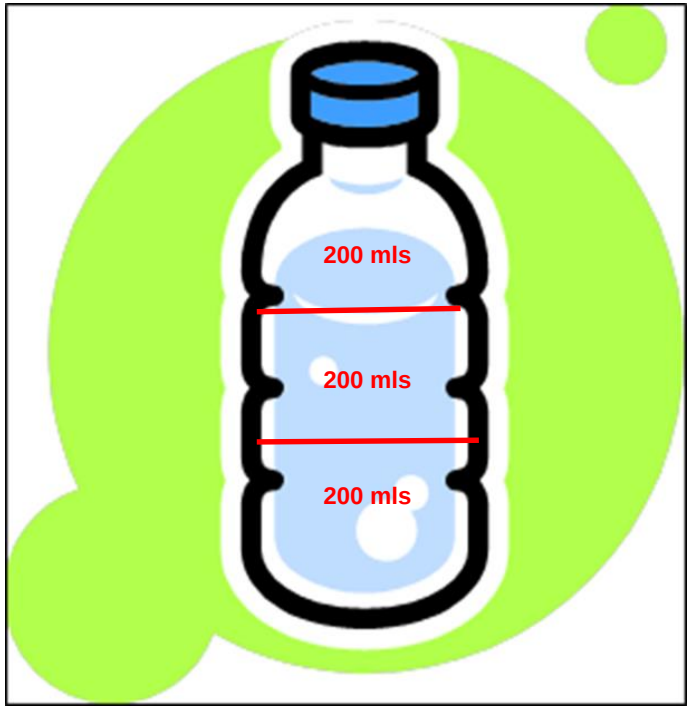
Monitoring Drink Levels



- **In order for a consistent approach to drinking fluids between home and setting/school, it would be good practice for your child to take a full clear drinks bottle in with them each day. The bottle should be marked into three sections. Your child should be encouraged to drink…**
- Down to the first line at morning break
- Down to the second line at lunch
- The remainder at afternoon break.

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The Nappy Test

Once regular fluids have been introduced and maintained for at least a couple of weeks, it is important to assess whether your child's bladder is holding and emptying efficiently. At this point you need to to carry out a 'Nappy Test'. This will inform of toilet readiness.

- Buy some good quality kitchen paper
- Choose a free weekend or couple of days to carry out the test
- Line each nappy with a folded sheet of kitchen paper
- Check the nappy every 1 ½ hrs from the first change in morning and record whether it's wet or dry
- After this period, check the recordings and if the nappy has been more dry than wet its time to swap the nappy for cotton pants!

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Why Pants not Pull Ups?

There is a tendency that families make the transition from nappy to pants by using pull-ups. Please try not to do so…

Cotton Pants

- Are considerably less absorbent
- Children will feel if they are wet
- Are easy to pull up and down
- Are cheaper to buy
- Are washable

Pull Ups

- Draw moisture away from body
- Children will not feel if they are wet
- Are difficult to pull up and down
- Are expensive to buy
- Are disposable

To bridge the gap to help your child to recognise the feeling of being wet, they can wear cotton pants under the nappy.

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Being Prepared for Toilet Training

- Buy a strong potty with a rigid base
- Be mindful of clothing – Are they easy to get on and off ?
- Supply your child's setting/school with sufficient spare clothes
- Go shopping together for some cotton pants
- Decide what you are going to call wee and poo

Accidents will happen. Be prepared!

If your child attends a setting/school:

Have a discussion with a member of staff and make a plan to support your child during the toilet training process.

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Let's Go

- Leave a potty in a downstairs toilet and/or in the bathroom
- Read or look at storybooks with your child about using the potty/toilet.
- As a family, be open about using the toilet yourselves
- Encourage a potty/toilet sit after mealtimes for just a few minutes.
- Introduce distraction methods to encourage a long enough sit (approx 1 min per age up to 4yrs old, then 5-10 mins from 4yrs upwards.
- Reward for sitting on the potty/toilet not just for performing on it.

REMEMBER: Gentle reminders and prompts

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Not Happening?

- If your child does not feel happy about sitting on the potty consider using the toilet instead.
- If for any reason your child is not quite ready for toilet training, stop the process and return to it in a few weeks time.

‘If you first don’t succeed try and try again’

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Potty to Toilet

Sitting on the toilet is the next step after sitting on a potty. For MOST it will be a natural progression. For others its won't be so easy. Things to consider:

Provide a step to…

- Help a child get on to the toilet.
- Provide a rest and good base for their feet. **(Important for pooing)**

Consider fitting a child's toilet seat inside the standard seat to provide security and stability

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Out and About

- Continue to encourage toilet training when out and about to maintain consistancy.
- Be prepared by taking a sufficient supply of clothing etc with you.
- Line the car seat and buggy with a plastic bag or disposible mat in case of accidents.
- **Consider carrying a portable potty with you.**

BE CONSISTANT, FLEXIBLE AND ALLOW TIME

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Needing a Nappy to Poo

- Some children feel more secure to do a poo in a nappy.
- Consider the following to change this:
- Ensure nappies are kept in the bathroom.
- Most likely, your child will have a regular time to do a poo. Try to encourage a potty/toilet sit at this time with or without wearing a nappy.
- If wearing a nappy, gently see if your child will let you remove the nappy or loosen the tabs.
- If able, remove the nappy and line potty or toilet with it to catch the poo.
- If really reluctant, you could make a hole in the nappy, so the poo can drop through.
- Involve your child in emptying the nappy contents down the toilet and flushing the poo away.

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Children with Additional Needs

Toilet training for children with additional needs can be done in much the same way as teaching a child without, provided that there is not a physical reason for not being able to sit on a potty or toilet. It just might take a little longer in some cases.

Things to consider:

- If your child has an additional need, it will not always be possible for them to be able to communicate their thoughts and feelings. Therefore you might not be able to rely on their signals to tell you when they're ready to potty train.
- Get to know and record how often your child goes for a wee or poo to help decide regards readiness.
- Create a potty or toilet routine based on the information you have recorded.

As with any child, it is really important to ensure they feel relaxed, comfortable and secure about using a potty or toilet. It might be necessary to seek advice from an Occupational Therapist who can advise which support is best whilst toilet training at home and at the setting/school.

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Recap

- Encourage your child to drink at least 6-8 cups of fluid per day
- Everything should take place in the toileting area.
- Try changing your child whilst they stand, rather than lying them down.
- Encourage boys to sit not stand whilst toilet training
- Be consistent, keep calm, keep positive. There will always be accidents!

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Referral Process

- Should for any reason your child have difficulty with toilet training, please seek advice from your GP or Health Visitor/School Nurse who will provide basic diet and fluid information, help with behaviour and signpost to ERIC website.

- If, after following this advice and support,no further progress is made ask the Health Practitioner for your child to be referred directly into the Paediatric Bladder and Bowel Service….

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Information

Contact your Health Visitor/School Nurse.

OR

Take a look at these useful websites and podcasts:

- **www.eric.org.uk**
- **www.bbuk.org.uk**

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Contacts

Public Health Nursing Hubs (Health Visiting/School Nursing):

SOUTH: ***0333 234 1901***
EXETER: ***0333 234 1902***
EAST: ***0333 234 1903***
NORTH: ***0333 234 1904***
TORBAY: ***0300 333 5352***

Paediatric Bladder & Bowel Care Service:

Tel: ***01392 208044***
e-mail: ***ndht.pbbc@nhs.net***

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Thank you for Listening

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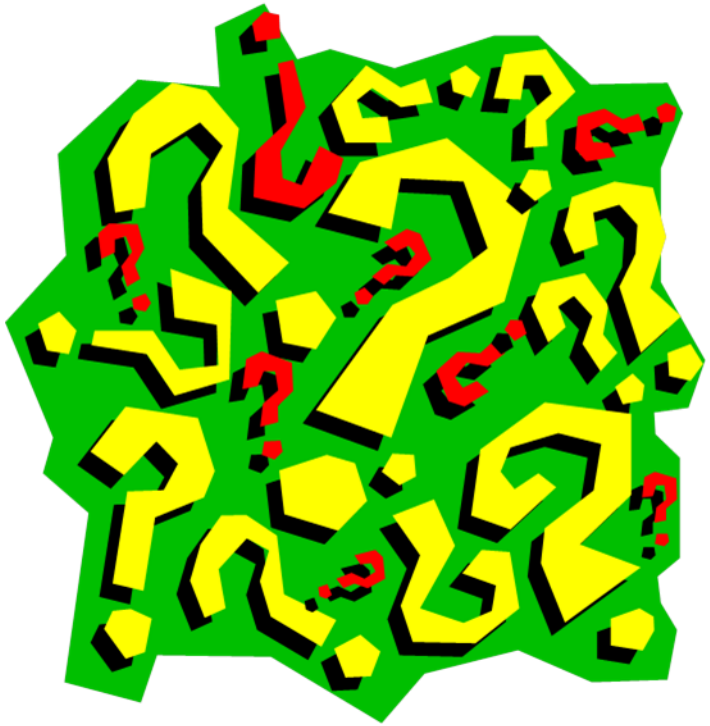
Any Questions?



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As a service we always appreciate any feedback.

Please use the QR code below, using the reference….

‘A Parents Guide to Potty/Toilet Training’
in the
‘What is your story about?’ box.

Many Thanks.

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