

The Scoop on **BABY POOP**

Baby poop is probably something you were expecting to deal with as a parent, but did anyone tell you how varied the contents of your newborn's diapers could be? I mean, who knew you'd spend THIS MUCH time thinking about poop? What's normal? What's cause for concern? Read on!

As you likely already know by now, baby poop can come in many different colours, shades and textures- and still be considered normal!

Diaper changes are a big part of any parent's daily routine, and they can also be an important way of keeping an eye on your baby's health.



What's Normal?

Meconium:

Your baby's few diapers will probably contain meconium: a gooey, dark-green, tar-like substance, with hardly any smell.

Meconium is made from things like skin cells, amniotic fluid and other particles your baby swallowed while still in the womb. It usually takes a few days for all the meconium to pass and you will likely notice your newborn's poop start to get lighter and runnier. Many parents will notice a shift from almost black to a yellow/green with less mucus.

'Regular' Baby Poop:

Once you're past the meconium stage what is 'regular' or 'normal' in terms of poop can vary a LOT. Often, this has to do with how you are feeding your little one.

Breastfeeding?

For the first few months your baby's stools may resemble mustard, with a slightly runny and sometimes grainy consistency. The poop will have no smell.

Formula feeding?

This poop will usually be firmer and smellier than that of a breastfed baby. It also tends to be darker in colour – formula-fed poop can be pale brown or may even take on a yellowy-green hue.

Starting solids?

Once you introduce solids you'll start to see (and smell!) some major changes in the contents of your baby's diapers. Stools will get firmer and darker, and they tend to smell much stronger now too. If you are doing baby led weaning you may also notice bits of undigested food, like the skins of peas or tomatoes. This isn't a cause for alarm and is totally normal! Your baby's digestive system is still figuring out how to process these new foods.

What can the color tell us?

You might be surprised at the colors of poop your baby can produce- ranging from mustard-like shades of breast-milk poop to the darker tan of formula-fed poop to the rainbow that seems to appear once you start feeding solids. You may also notice mucus from time to time.

Green: Green poop can seem especially alarming, especially if it's the first time you're seeing it, but it is *usually* not anything to worry about and within the normal realm of variation. All sorts of things can cause it, including the iron in some types formula. It could even be caused certain medicines or green foods passed on to your baby through breast milk. If your little one seems otherwise happy and healthy with no major changes in behavior, sleep or eating, then green poop probably isn't a cause for concern (of course, when in doubt, always check in with their doctor! You should also check in if you notice other symptoms alongside green poop).

While healthy poop can come in lots of hues, there are also some 'warning' colors to keep in mind and watch for. While it may turn out to be nothing, you should always check in with your baby's doctor if you notice your baby's poop is any of the following:

Red: Traces of red can be due to blood in your baby's stool, so it's important for your baby's doctor to look into what might be causing it. One more common cause is cow's milk protein allergy (CMPA). It is important not to panic as there can also be many harmless reasons to see red poop. For instance, if your baby has started solids, certain foods (especially beets!) can give poop a red tint.

Black: Your baby's first poop (that is, meconium) will likely be very dark green or black. This is normal and not something to worry about. Black poop that occurs past the first 5 days, however, may indicate something more serious. Black poop can be caused by bleeding somewhere in the intestinal tract, and therefore it is important to get checked out. Equally, black poop may be harmless. Foods such as blueberries can cause stools that appear black, and some babies may have very dark green stools that could appear black.

White: Stools that are very pale or white are very rare BUT if you do see this color of poop in your baby's diaper it is important to seek medical attention ASAP as it could be a sign of a liver condition that requires treatment.

