

**"Dr. Art" Quintanilla, MD**  
Board Certified Pediatrician

Post-graduate Training:

Maimonides Children's Center/State University of New York Downstate Medical Center  
Miller Children's Hospital-Long Beach Memorial Medical Center/University of California at Irvine

35-900 Bob Hope Drive, Suite 140, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270  
Tel: (760) 770-0000

---

- **CHRONIC CONSTIPATION IN CHILDHOOD.**

Constipation is so common in children that it constitutes the number one cause of abdominal pain in pediatrics. When it becomes a chronic problem, it leads to fecal impaction, in this situation the child practically has a bowel obstruction because of excessive fecal material, and severe abdominal pain ensues.

- **Common causes of constipation:**

- 1) An excessive whole milk and dairy products intake.
- 2) Frequent intake of fats and oils in meals.
- 3) Poor physical activity i.e. sedentarism.
- 4) On occasion, some medications induce constipation as a side effect, for instance some antihistamines, cough medications, iron, etc...

- **Frequent symptoms of constipation:**

- a) Abdominal pain, usually intense and cramp - like, frequently occurring after meals or at night.
- b) Nausea and vomiting especially at night.
- c) Pain on defecation, fear of defecation, anal fissures or lacerations.

- Routine management of constipation:

- 1) First and foremost, **DIET:**

- a) High clear liquids intake, 12-16 ounces/day: fruit juices, prune juice.
- b) High leafy green vegetables daily intake: broccoli, spinach, cauliflower, lettuce, etc...
- c) White meats intake is preferred over red meats, mainly broiled, avoid fried meats.
- d) High fruits intake: papaya, oranges, prunes, tangerines, grapefruits, etc...  
Avoid bananas.

- 2) Fight sedentary attitudes, cut TV time to 1 hour per day and increase **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:** tricycle, biking, rope jumping, swimming, etc... Older children should practice sports.

- 3) Follow your pediatrician's instructions: enemas and laxatives are to be used when medically indicated.