



Toilet Training Your Child: Care Instructions

Your Care Instructions

Many parents aren't sure when to begin toilet training. It's best to wait until your child is truly ready. A child may be physically ready after 18 months of age. But it may take longer to be ready emotionally.

There are many different ways to toilet train. Start by showing your child how to use the toilet. You may have to repeat this many times. When your child shows interest or progress, you can respond with praise and encouragement.

Toilet training works best when it is a positive experience. If it becomes a struggle or a battle of wills, it is best to stop for a while. You may be ready for toilet training. But your child may not be. Be patient, and look forward to the freedom from diapers.

Follow-up care is a key part of your child's treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if your child is having problems. It's also a good idea to know your child's test results and keep a list of the medicines your child takes.

How can you care for your child at home?

Getting started

- Make sure it's a good time to start. It's best if all family members can help. If your family is going through a big change, it may not be the right time. Big changes could include the arrival of a new baby, a move, or a change in preschool or child care.
- Talk with your child about bowel movements and urinating. Your child may prefer the words "poop" and "pee." It's okay to use these words. But use the more formal terms too. Then your child will learn what they mean.
- If you decide to use a potty chair, let your child pick one that is sturdy and comfortable. Be patient, and give your child time to get used to it.
- Talk with your child about how to use the toilet or potty chair. Explain how it works.
- Give your child time to get used to the idea of using the toilet or potty chair. Let your child sit on it and read a book. Or let your child sit on it with his or her diaper on while having a bowel movement or urinating.

When your child is ready

- Dress your child in clothes that are easy to take off. Clothes with elastic waistbands are good. Pull-on diapers also work well.

- Help your child feel comfortable and safe on the toilet. Your child may prefer to sit backward. Or you may choose to use a toddler toilet seat (also called a potty seat). This is a seat that attaches to your regular toilet seat. Be sure to tell your child that he or she will not fall in.
- Do not force your child to sit on the toilet. Let your child sit on the potty only for 5 minutes at a time unless he or she is passing stool or urine.
- If your child is a boy, it is easiest to teach him to urinate while he sits on the toilet. Some boys may need to push down on their penis so that the urine goes into the bowl and not on the seat. As your son grows taller, he can learn to urinate while standing. A small step stool may help him aim better.
- Teach your child to wipe well. Show him or her how to remove toilet paper from the roll, wipe, and throw the used toilet paper in the toilet. Many children need help wiping, especially after a bowel movement, until about age 4 or 5.
- Help your child flush the toilet. If your child is afraid to flush, it is okay for you to flush the toilet after he or she leaves the room. In time, your child will be able to flush the toilet without a problem.
- Teach your child how to wash his or her hands after using the toilet.
- Praise and encourage your child for trying to use the toilet. You may want to reward your child with fun activities. These could include stickers or special playtime with you.
- Do not get angry or punish your child if he or she wets or soils his or her pants by accident. Tell your child that it's okay and that he or she will get better with practice.

When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your child's health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You need help with toilet training.

Where can you learn more?

Go to [NextGen Knowledgebase](#).

Enter G786 in the search box to learn more about "Toilet Training Your Child: Care Instructions."