

Bowel Massage for Constipation and Dysmotility

The purpose of the bowel massage is to both improve the motility and effective squeeze of the colon and to help restore more normal and natural regular, daily stooling. The massage itself helps stimulate squeeze and action of the large colon. Doing the massage at the same time once daily helps to establish a regular and predictable time for evacuation. Because natural times for stooling are in the morning after standing up or shortly after a meal, it is best to choose one of these times to do the massage. It is important to choose the same timing every day, so choose a time best for your child and your routine. The most common times are 30 minutes after dinner or after an afternoon snack; however, the best time is the time that fits your family's routine.

The complete massage only takes a few minutes:

- Step 1:** Starting at the lower *right* side of your child's tummy near the appendix applying gentle pressure in small circular movements.
- Step 2:** Continue massaging with gentle pressure straight upwards towards your child's *right* rib cage using small circular motions as above.
- Step 3:** Continue massaging with similar gentle pressure from your child's *right* rib cage to their *left* left rib cage.
- Step 4:** After reaching the *left* rib cage, begin to move straight downward, continuing with the same motion and pressure until the area on the lower *left* side just above the groin, then continue along the left lower tummy until over the middle portion above pubic bone.
- Step 5:** Repeat this massage 3-5 times using gradually more firm pressure as best tolerated. It isn't the amount of pressure that is important, as much as the massage of the colon and stimulating the colonic squeeze.

You will be following the pattern of motility that would naturally occur in the colon as seen below beginning on the lower right near the appendix, then moving up, across to the left, and down on the left side until you get to the area of the sigmoid colon:

