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## UNUSUAL COLOR OF STOOL

### What is an unusual color of stool?

Any color other than brown is an unusual color for stools (bowel movements). Stool color relates more to what is eaten than to any disease. Unusual colors of the stool are almost always due to food coloring or food additives. In children with diarrhea, food passes through the body very quickly, and stools often come out the same color as the Kool-Aid or gelatin water that went in.

### What are some common colors and causes?

- Red: blood, red gelatin, red Kool-Aid, cranberries, red cereals, tomato juice, tomato soup, beets, red medicines
- Black: blood from the stomach, iron, bismuth (for example, Pepto-Bismol), licorice, cigarette ashes, charcoal, Oreo cookies, grape juice
- Green: green gelatin, iron, spinach, diarrhea, breast-feeding (especially during the first 2 months of life)
- Yellow-white: aluminum hydroxide (antacids), excessive milk, hepatitis.

### When should I call the office?

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- The stools are red or black and tarry without explanation.
- Your child starts acting very sick.

Call during office hours if:

- Other unusual colors continue for more than 3 days after you have eliminated any suspected foods. Be prepared to bring in a stool sample.
- You have other questions or concerns.