



Poos - Why do your poos smell?

Fact

- Bacteria live in your intestine and they help clean your intestines by eating the wastes that your body doesn't need and that waste becomes poos.
- When bacteria eat they need to get rid of their wastes so they "do poos" too. Their wastes are chemicals called indole and skatole, and a gas called hydrogen sulfide and these chemicals stink!
- These chemicals mix with the wastes in your body so they make your poo stink!
- They're the same chemicals that make your farts stink too.
- You might have noticed that sometimes your poos smell more than other times. Well it depends on what you have eaten and how much gas and chemicals were produced by the bacteria as they ate those food wastes.

Do you know

- All animals poo, even fish!
- An elephant can poo up to 30 litres at once – that's 15 two litre ice cream containers full of poo in one "toilet stop"!
- You should always wash your hands after you've been to the toilet. The bacteria are good for your intestine, but on your hands it can make you sick.
- The scientific word for poo is faeces (fee-sees)
- Poos are about 75% water. The remaining 25% is made up of a mixture of things, stuff your body can't break down (have you ever noticed whole corn kernels in your poo) some salt, bile (bile is made up of dead red blood cells from your liver) and of course the bacteria.
- Your poos get their brown colour from the bile (bile is actually a yellow or greeny colour) and the bacteria and food wastes change the bile into the brown poo colour.

Experiments you can do

Find out what difference the amount of water in your poo makes with fake poo.

What you need:

3 bowls

1 cup of plain baking flour in each bowl

$\frac{1}{4}$ of a cup of water

$\frac{1}{2}$ of a cup of water

$\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of water

a spoon for mixing

What you do:

Let an adult know what you're doing otherwise they'll wonder what's going on!

In the first bowl of flour mix in the $\frac{1}{4}$ of a cup of water.

In the second bowl of flour mix in the $\frac{1}{2}$ a cup of water.

In the third bowl mix in the $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of water.

When the water's all mixed in use your hands to make poo shapes. What happens? Is it easy to do with each of the mixtures?

You'll probably find that the first one is too dry and the third one is too wet but the one with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of water is just right.

If your poos have too much water in them like the third bowl you get runny poos – diarrhoea.

If your body holds on to poos for too long too much water is removed from them and they go all dry and hard like bowl number one when this happens

it's called constipation and it's hard to push your poos out of your bottom.

But when you have the right amount of water – like in bowl 2 your poos are soft and squishy.

Other Investigations

See if you can find out more about your digestive system and how the food you eat moves through your body.

Next time you're eating corn kernels keep an eye on your "wastes" when you go to the toilet and see if you can tell when the corn kernels have passed through your body.