

QA 27 – Color/Texture of Bowel Movement with Formula Change

QUESTION:

Do you know of any research related to the color/texture of bowel movements for infants when on different formulas or when changing formulas? I have heard that “green colored poop” was related to possible lactose intolerance in infants. Is this true?

ANSWER:

The color/texture of bowel movement is associated with the type of protein the infant is ingesting. Greenish colored stool is associated with soy protein (soft, yellowish green stool), casein hydrolysate (green, some mucus, small volume), sodium caseinate (formed, greenish brown, little free water), and unmodified cow’s milk protein (formed, greenish brown, very little free water).

Carbohydrate malabsorption, as seen with lactose intolerance, is characterized by abdominal distension, explosive stools, and watery, osmotic diarrhea. Carbohydrate malabsorption can be diagnosed by checking for reducing substances in the stool (>0.5%) and stool pH of <5.5.

Reference:

- 1) Keller, Gerri, “Clinical Assessment” in Nutritional Care for High-Risk Newborns (rev. Ed.), S. Groh-Wargo, M. Thompson, J. Cox, editors, 1994, Precept Press, Inc., Chicago, pp19-20.