

Rectal Prolapse in Children.

What is rectal prolapse?

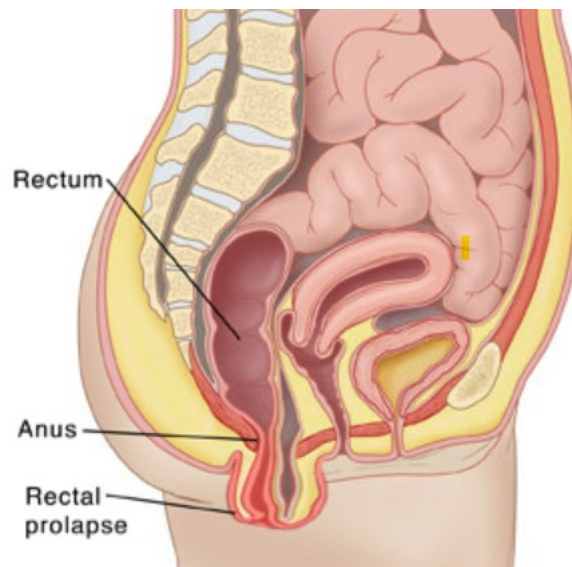
Rectal prolapse is when part of the rectum slips out through the anus (the opening where poop leaves the body). You may see or feel a red or pink mass at the opening of the anus. The tissue may stick out past the anus. This may happen after pooping, then go back on its own, or may stay out. Poop or mucus may also leak from the anus because of the prolapse. Most cases in children are not dangerous and get better with simple treatments.

Why does rectal prolapse happen?

Rectal prolapse happens when the muscles and tissues in the pelvis become weak. This can happen in children when:

- Potty training.
- Straining or sitting on the toilet for a long time.
- They have constipation (hard or painful poops or going less often than usual).
- They have diarrhea (watery or loose poops).

The most important step is to make pooping easier and treat constipation. Straining while pooping often causes prolapse.



How is rectal prolapse treated?

Treat prolapse by preventing constipation, because straining during pooping often causes it. To help your child:

- Give laxatives, stool softeners, or fiber if your child's doctor prescribes them. Give them every day as directed. The goal is to have 1–2 formed, soft poops each day.
- Add more fiber-rich foods to your child's diet, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

- Set a regular toilet schedule. Have your child sit on the toilet for no more than 5 minutes after each meal. Use a timer so they do not sit too long. Do not allow screens in the bathroom.
- Help your child avoid straining or pushing hard to poop. Place a step stool under their feet so their knees sit higher than their hips. If your child strains while pushing, have them blow bubbles or a pinwheel instead.
- A doctor may refer your child to a pelvic floor therapist to learn exercises to help make pooping easier and strengthen muscles.
- If your child is starting potty training, you may need to stop for a short time until their symptoms improve.

What do I do if rectal prolapse occurs?

If the rectal prolapse occurs and does not self-reduce (go back in on its own):

1. Place your child on their side with their knees pulled towards their chest.
2. Put a cool washcloth over the rectum for 1–2 minutes.
3. With a lubricated finger, gently press the tissue back inside.
4. Afterward, gently hold the buttocks together for up to 5 minutes.

Take your child to the emergency room if:

- The tissue does not go back in.
- The tissue turns purple or blue.
- Your child has serious rectal pain.

How long does my child need treatment for rectal prolapse?

Most children start to feel better over several months. Their new bowel regimen will need to continue for several weeks to months once the prolapse goes away. Sometimes prolapse happens when children have a lot of diarrhea. This usually goes away once the diarrhea stops.

Will my child need surgery for the rectal prolapse?

Most children improve with medicine, diet and behavior changes and do not need surgery. If your child's symptoms continue even with treatment and they have other medical conditions, surgery may be needed. The good news is that most children fully recover without needing surgery.

Call the General Surgery Clinic at 214-456-6040 if your child has:

- Fever over 100.4F (38C)
- Rectal bleeding
- Abdominal pain or swelling
- Repeated throwing up
- Your child cannot poop