

Self Care Toileting

Manipulating Toilet Paper

Your child has to be able to master several skills in order to become independent in going to the toilet. Once they have gained control over their bladder and bowel they need to learn how to clean themselves. This involves being able to reach behind themselves, being able to turn their hand, and knowing where to wipe. The second stage of this process is being able to tear a couple of sheets of toilet paper from the roll and fold them ready to wipe.



Before you begin these activities first check how your child prepares toilet paper for use:

- Does s/he take too little or too much from the roll?
- Can they pull the paper apart at the perforations or do they use a grab and pull approach?
- Is it scrunched up too small or left as a long thin strip?
- Does s/he know how to fold it ready for use?

Suggestions

- Try bottom wiping with paper tissues (bigger than standard may be best) rather than toilet paper, which can be awkward to gather together.
- Try wet wipes rather than dry tissue/toilet roll, but dispose of in a bin (perhaps making use of nappy sacks or old plastic carrier bags), to prevent waste pipes blocking.
- Practice this skill when clean to let you see where the problems are arising without worrying about your child getting messy.
- Use good quality toilet paper in the early stages of toilet training if you can. The perforations are more clearly defined and tear better and the paper is less likely to fall apart when wet thus keeping little fingers clean.
- It may be helpful for the child to use disposable gloves when practicing for real - (depending on age of child/hand size). These may also be useful for the adult when the child is learning to wipe themselves but still being messy. Have Wet Wipes at the ready!
- Show your child how much toilet paper you expect them to use; encourage this by marking a roll with an "X" to indicate where to tear; if your child can count, have them count the number of squares of paper to be used. Make a rhyme - "one square, two squares, three squares, tear".





Activity Ideas

Play games/activities to improve your child's in-hand manipulative skills. There are some suggestions listed below.

- 1. Collage Pictures:** Make collage pictures by scrunching tissues paper/toilet paper/pages from magazines (torn into smaller pieces first) to encourage development of a pinch grasp.
- 2. Wiping Up and Polishing:** Encourage your child to help with household tasks such as wiping the table/worktop, washing dishes, cleaning the sink, polishing/dusting furniture, washing the car or their own sit 'n ride toy.
- 3. Construction Games:** Lego, Stickle Bricks, Magnetic Construction Games etc will help develop finger strength and fine manipulation. Pulling bricks apart is as important as pushing together.
- 4. Print Pictures:** Use finger paints and a selection of household items to make print pictures e.g. Scrunched kitchen paper, pieces of kitchen sponges cut to varying sizes, pieces of old cloth such as facecloth, old dusters, J cloth.

