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CausesTreatmentPreventionComplicationsWhen to see a doctorOutlookSummaryWhite specks in stool usually result from food, medication, or a parasite. Treatment often includes dietary changes or medication.Changes in the appearance of stool can signal a health problem. However, these changes often reflect adjustments to diet or bowel habits.Nuts and seeds can sometimes go through the body without breaking down completely. The outer shells of some pills can also survive the digestive process and show up in the stool.Tapeworms or pinworms can look like white specks, and medications are available to treat both infections.Share on PinterestWestend61/Getty ImagesCertain types of food, medication, or parasites can cause white specks in stool.The body does not digest some foods as thoroughly as others. For example, sesame seeds and some nuts, such as almonds, are white. Small pieces of these foods may show up in stool as white specks.These seeds have a hard outer layer that protects the contents inside, and they may pass through the digestive system whole.White specks in stool that occur soon after a person has eaten seeds are usually no cause for concern.Learn more about undigested food in the stool.Some pills have hard outer casings. The body may absorb the medication but not this casing, which can appear in stools. Empty cases are sometimes called ghost pills. Some people may be concerned when a drug casing appears in their stool because they think the medication has not worked. However, finding the pill casing in the stool is normal for long-acting or extended-release medications.If a person is worried, their doctor may be able to prescribe an alternative medication. For example, some medicines are available as liquids rather than pills.Tapeworms and pinworms can appear as white specks in stools. Tapeworm infection is uncommon, but these specks are a key symptom.White or yellow specks may be pieces of parasitic worms. These pieces are usually flat, square-shaped, and about the size of a grain of rice.Learn more about parasitic infections in humans.The correct treatment will depend on what is causing white specks in a person's stool.If white specks in a person's stool result from undigested food, then it is typically not cause for concern. However, assessing which foods attempt pass whole and lining them can reduce how often this occurs.If medication casings pass through a person's gastrointestinal tract without proper digestion, doctors may be able to prescribe alternative medicines. Instead of capsules, pills or oral solutions may be available.Oral medications can treat many gastrointestinal parasites. These medications kill the parasite, which will pass out of the body in a stool.Changes in the color and appearance of the stool are likely to happen occasionally, and prevention is not always possible.A person may choose to keep a food diary and check the appearance of their stools. This can help to determine the cause of white specks. Avoiding whole nuts and seeds should cause the appearance of stool to return to normal.To prevent intestinal parasite infections, people should:wash hands thoroughly before preparing and eatingonly drink from safe water sourcesthoroughly wash any garden-grown fruit and vegetablesdeworm pets regularlyLearn about the proper handwashing technique.Remnants of foods and pill casings passing to the stool are typically not a cause for concern. However, parasitic infections can lead to complications.It is unusual for a person with a tapeworm infection to have complications. However, newly hatched tapeworms can move from the gut to other organs, and this can cause cysts. A cyst is a small sac filled with fluid. Some cysts can stop organs from working correctly, most commonly the brain or liver.A person who suspects a parasitic infection should see a doctor as the infection will usually require medication.Some may wish to consult a doctor if diet changes do not normalize stool color. A doctor should ensure that a person is correctly absorbing medication if pill casings continually appear in stools.If the stool is mostly or entirely white, see a doctor. This may indicate that the pancreas, liver, or bile duct is not functioning as it should.White specks in the stool are not a serious concern. Small changes can prevent the occurrence and many treatments exist in cases of parasitic infections.Although the appearance of undigested food pill casings in the stool may be worrying, it is often not a cause for concern. It is natural for some foods to pass into the stool undigested, and the body will absorb the necessary medication from within casings during digestion.Pinworm and tapeworm infections are unpleasant but may carry no symptoms. Oral treatments can treat most parasitic infections quickly and without complication.White specks in the stool may result from undigested food, pill casings, or a parasitic infection.Changes to diet and medication types can treat these cases, while simple medications can treat parasitic infections.Anyone who suspects they have an intestinal parasite should seek medical assistance immediately. It can be pretty, um, crappy dealing with bowel issues.Figuring out what's normal and what isn't can be a challenge if you don't know what to look for. Stools come in all shapes and sizes and can shift forms depending on what you're eating or what is going on in your life at the moment."Bowel movements change from person to person depending on his or her diet, physical activity, how much water they consume and what medications they take," said M. Nuri Kalkay, a retired gastroenterologist and health blogger.Everyone has their own barometer of how often their body is used to going and what a typical stool looks like for them. But what if things change and you see something beyond the norm in the toilet? We chatted with some experts to determine what bowel habits are aren't so ordinary and might require a trip to the doctor.Black and/or tarry stoolsJeffery M. Nelson, surgical director at the Center for Inflammatory Bowel and Colorectal Diseases at Baltimore's Mercy Medical Center, said if your poop is black, "not just dark brown," you should be concerned. "This means bleeding is happening from an upper GI source like the esophagus, stomach or small bowel," he explained. There are some exceptions to this: If you're taking iron supplements, for example, your stools may appear dark green to the point where they almost look black. If you've taken bismuth medication like Pepto Bismol, that can also make your stools look almost black. It's always best to check with a doctor if you're unsure.Bright red blood in your stoolsIf you find blood in your stool either by itself on the toilet paper, in the water or streaked in the stools, this can indicate a bleeding source from the anal canal or a low rectal source. "Things like internal hemorrhoids, anal fissures, rectal polyps or rectal cancers can all do this," said Nelson. All of these are reasons to see a doctor.Maroon-colored stoolsIf your stools are this color, then they're likely also more liquid in consistency and paired with an unpleasant, distinct odor. According to Nelson, this can indicate bleeding from the very end of the small bowel or the colon. "Diverticulosis and arteriovenous malformations are the classic causes of this presentation," and a reason to go to the emergency room, he said.Pale, oily and especially foul-smelling stools"This finding is called steatorrhea and is due to excess fat in the stool," explained Chris Carrubba, an internal medicine doctor in Jacksonville, Florida. Carrubba said steatorrhea is often seen with malabsorption syndromes, pancreatic insufficiency and biliary disease. "The presence of steatorrhea indicates difficulty absorbing fat and these patients are at risk of developing deficiencies in fat soluble vitamins," like vitamins A, D, E and K, he said.Stools that are different than your typical bowel movementsYour body is a creature of habit in a lot of ways. For example, if you consistently have smooth, long sausage-like stools and suddenly they change to a completely different size, you should speak to your doctor. "Pencil thin versus log-like routinely could mean that an inflammatory condition may be present such as Crohn's or infection," said Karen Soika, a general surgeon in Greenwich, Connecticut. If the consistency of your stools has changed to watery or diarrhea, this could signify irritable bowel syndrome, an infectious cause or an inflammatory bowel disease such as Ulcerative colitis. IBS or infections can also increase constipation. Watery diarrhea after a camping tripThis can be due to giardia, "a protozoal organism that is found in freshwater and the reason that you should always boil and sanitize water from mountain streams or lakes," Carrubba said. Ingestion of this organism can result in giardiasis, which leads to abdominal pain and persistent, watery diarrhea. The issue can be treated with antimicrobials. In addition to drinking contaminated water, you can also be exposed to giardia by eating uncooked vegetables or fruits that were rinsed in contaminated water and by improperly washing hands after coming into contact with feces or an infected human or animal.Mucus in the stoolThis is usually due to inflammation of the intestines, said Peyton Berokimo, a gastroenterologist in Los Angeles. He noted that the condition can be seen in inflammatory bowel diseases like ulcerative colitis or Crohn's. It can also be due to inflammation caused by a bacterial infection or IBS. "Mucus associated with blood and/or abdominal pain should not be ignored and requires medical attention," he explained.Hard or infrequent stoolsThis signifies constipation and is usually caused by a lack of fiber in your diet, as well as low water intake. However, this issue may also be caused by medications, blockages in the intestine, or in more rare cases, colon cancer. "Constipation can be treated in many ways and I always begin with increasing fiber and water intake. The recommended daily intake of fiber is at least 25 grams and the amount of water needed varies from person to person," said Jack Braha, a gastroenterologist at Brooklyn Gastroenterology and Endoscopy Associates. Laxatives are available over-the-counter to help with this issue and work by either increasing the motility in your gut or increasing the amount of water delivered to the colon, Braha said. "But for symptoms that do not rapidly improve or begin after the age of 50, it is important to seek advice from a gastroenterologist in order to determine if further testing like a colonoscopy is needed to check for more serious issues such as an intestinal obstruction or colon cancer," he said.Loose, watery or frequent stools"Diarrhea is common after eating bad food or from an infection and should not last more than a week in most instances," Braha explained. Loose stools may be a cause for concern if the diarrhea lasts longer than two weeks or when it is in conjunction with bleeding, weight loss or symptoms that keep you awake at night."When diarrhea is not from an infectious source, we look for other common causes like lactose intolerance, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease or celiac disease," Braha said. "Gastroenterologists can usually find the cause of diarrhea by checking certain blood tests, stool tests and performing a colonoscopy."For two decades, HuffPost has been fearless, unflinching, and relentless in pursuit of the truth. Support our mission to keep us around for the next 20 — we can't do this without you. Support HuffPostGenerally, it's a good idea to make an appointment with your doctor if you're concerned about your bowel movements at all. Your poop may be trying to tell you something. "r/r", "r/r", "r/r", "r/r", "adCount":0)>HealthWellnessDisease and Medical Conditionspoorirritable bowel syndrome Disclaimer: Results are not guaranteed** and may vary from person to person**. Credit: iStock.com/NomadSoull White specks in stools can result from a great number of health factors. It could mean that you are lactose intolerant, or the white substance in stool could just be the by-product of a chemical in your medication. Those white balls in poop could also be a warning sign of contaminated drinking water or serious medical conditions like colitis. It might even be bits of lining from your small intestine. Your stool is normally brown due to the presence of bile, a fluid produced by the liver to aid in digestion. White stools could indicate a problem with liver function, such as hepatitis or cirrhosis. In this article, we will examine the various causes of white specks in your stool along with how you may be able to treat them. What Causes White Specks in Stools? White specks in stools may be either innocuous or the symptom of a medical condition that needs your immediate attention. Some of the possible causes can include: 1. Fungal Infection / Candida Yeast Infection A fungal infection may be blame for the white specks in your poop. An overgrowth of Candida albicans yeast, for example, can manifest itself around the body for a while clumpy matter. This white gunk can appear on the tongue and cause symptoms like itching around what the vaginal area. This fungal matter can make its way to your stool, often appearing as white speck or as a white gel, or cheese-like substance within the stool. These fungal infections can often be the result of more serious conditions like AIDS or the side effect of chemotherapy, where the immune system is in a lowered state of function. 2. Mucus in Stool The white dots or specks in your stool may be the sign of excessive mucus in your digestive tract. Large amounts of light-colored or white mucus usually signal inflammation of the intestines, specifically the mucous lining, as seen in disorders like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), colitis, and Crohn's disease. Essentially, the mucus is produced by the body to help fight these types of conditions. The excess mucus ends up in your stool, creating these white specks in the feces. 3. Fatty Stool Too much fat in your stool can cause the appearance of pale, white-like poo. This is referred to as fatty stool or steatorrhea. Fatty stool happens when your body is not absorbing all of the fat in your digestive system, often due to a lack of bile. The fat must go somewhere, so it ends up in the feces, causing the discoloration. 4. Parasites The white bits in poo you are seeing may be the results of parasite that has infected your body, or may be the parasites themselves. Parasites like giardia and tapeworms can enter your body via contaminated drinking water and food. They often attach themselves to the lining of the intestines, where they grow or lay eggs that can later be passed in stools. 5. Certain Medications Some medications can produce white spots in your poop. Medications containing aluminum hydroxide, for example, can cause the stool to become pale with white specks. The chemical compound is found in certain antacids. Antibiotics can cause tiny white specks in stool, but it is often nothing to worry about as it is usually the remnants of the capsule that antibiotics came in. 6. Pancreatitis Pancreatitis is the inflammation or infection of the pancreas. The pancreas is the organ that creates the enzymes that help the body's other digestive juices digest and process sugars. When the pancreas is inflamed or infected, those enzymes may not be produced in the quantities that the body needs to digest properly. This can lead to fats and sugars making their way through the digestive system and into your stool, causing white spots. 7. Liver Problem Liver issues often result in white dots in feces. As mentioned, the liver is your body's source of bile. When that source is interrupted due to disease, medications, or other medical issues, bile creation may be lessened or in some cases, ceased. The lack of bile affects digestion, allowing bacteria and fats to be passed into the stool, giving it a pale color and/or white spots. 8. Biliary Atresia Similarly to other malfunctions of the liver, biliary atresia causes a lack of bile in the digestive system. It is a birth defect that causes one of the ducts connecting the liver to the gallbladder to be blocked, stopping the flow of bile between the two organs. The rare liver disease tends to prompt white, smelly feces. 9. Gallstones The gallbladder is connected to the release of bile from the liver via a duct. Gallstones are formed in the gallbladder from cholesterol or bilirubin and when they are set adrift in the gallbladder, they can occasionally block the duct that the bile travels on from the liver causing a lack of bile in the digestive system. 10. Celiac Disease Celiac disease is the small intestines' inability to digest certain nutrients, gluten in particular. This sensitivity to the protein family causes the immune system to attack the intestines, and the undigested material ends up in the stool, often as white flecks and spots. Numerous other issues can lead to white specks in feces or, perhaps more accurately, can lead to the conditions that can cause the white spots. Constipation, for example, may not cause the white spots by itself, but it is usually a sign that the body's digestive system is not functioning properly. The blockage can allow undigested food particles, vitamins, and minerals to build up. When the stool is finally released, it can be white or filled with white splotches. Cancers of the liver, stomach, and bowels may not directly cause the white spots in the feces, but they can trigger the health problem that does by interfering with digestion, causing the liver to create less bile, and the like. How to Treat White Specks in Stools Treating white, seed-like spots in stool can be a challenge. As is common with many health conditions, the underlying problem must first be identified. If you treat the inflammation, parasites, gallstones, etc., the white spots should disappear as a result. The first step in this process consists of going to a doctor for a full checkup. They will likely want a stool sample for testing. The stool sample test can help determine what the medical issue might be. Presence of bacteria can indicate an infection. Fatty stool may indicate issues with your digestive system. From there, the doctor may recommend a course of treatment for the medical issue that you are inflicted with. White Specks in Your Feces Should Be Examined Talking about your stool with anyone may be uncomfortable, but it's important to know that white spots in your stool are not normal. Their presence could mean that you are suffering from a failing liver, gluten or lactose intolerance, or ulcerative colitis. If you begin to see white spots in your feces, you should talk to a doctor as soon as possible. At best, you might require a course of antibiotics to get a small parasitic infection under control. At the very worst, you may have secured a head start for treating cancer or liver disease. Related Articles: Floating Poop: The Causes, Diagnosis, and Treatment What Does Dark Green Poop Mean? Is It Blood or Just Beets? How to Tell If the Blood in Your Stool Is a Problem Sources "Causes of White Specks in Stool, Treatment Remedies," Health Meds, last accessed August 30, 2017. 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