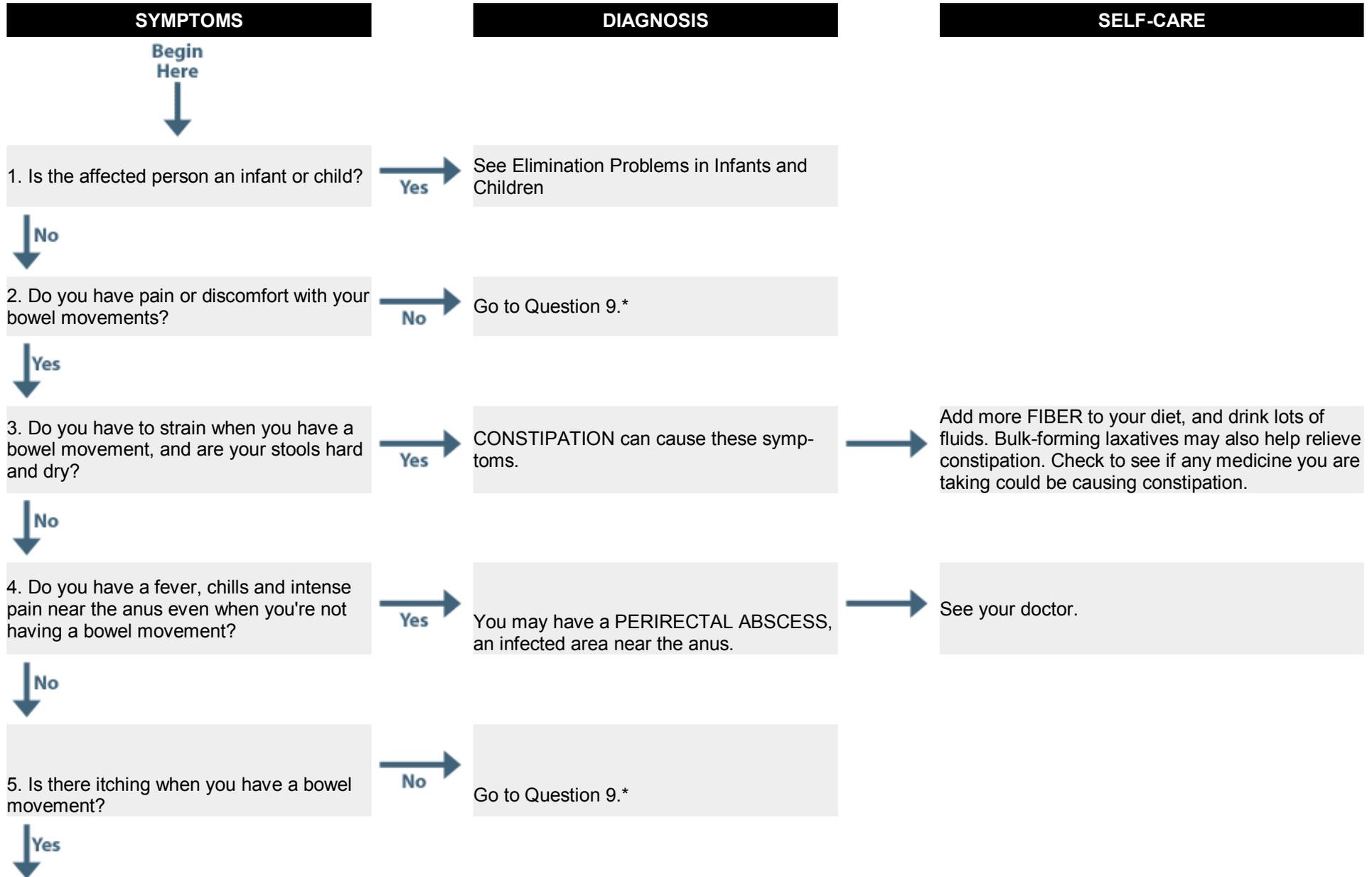


Elimination Problems

Follow this chart for more information about pain, itching or blood with a bowel movement.



6. Do you have a small reddish mass of tissue sticking out of your anus?

Yes

You may have a **RECTAL PROLAPSE**. People who have this condition may feel like they can't completely empty their bowels. They may also pass very small stools or be unable to control their bowel movements.

See your doctor.

No

7. Is there occasional bright red blood in your stools, and do you have a small, tender lump near the rectum?

Yes

You may have an external or thrombosed **HEMORRHOID**.

Using over-the-counter hemorrhoidal creams or suppositories and soaking the area in warm water may help relieve the pain and itching. If there's no improvement in 1 to 2 weeks, or if the bleeding

No

8. Do you have itching around your rectum even when you're not having a bowel movement?

Yes

Rectal itching may be a sign of a **YEAST INFECTION**, **ALLERGY** to toilet paper or **PINWORMS**.

Nonprescription antifungal medications for yeast infections or antiparasitic medications for pinworms are available. If you think an allergy is your problem, try using white, unscented toilet paper.

No

*9. Do you have blood on or mixed in your bowel movements?

Yes

The blood may be from internal **HEMORRHOIDS**. Internal hemorrhoids usually don't cause any discomfort. But **RECTAL CANCER** is another possibility, especially if you're over age 40. Other signs of rectal cancer may include changes in the shape of your stools and a cramping pain in your lower stomach.

See your doctor. Hemorrhoids are often treated with over-the-counter creams or suppositories. Soaking in warm water may also help relieve any discomfort.

No

10. Are your bowel movements gray or whitish?

Yes

You may have a **BLOCKAGE** in or near your gallbladder, or you may have a **LIVER DISEASE** or **INFECTION**.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY.

No

11. Do you have problems moving your bowels without a laxative or enema?



Overuse of laxatives can cause dependence on them.



Avoid using laxatives. Instead, try adding more FIBER to your diet, and drink lots of fluids. Keep in mind that it isn't necessary to have a bowel movement every day. A normal range is 3 times a day to 3 times a week.



For more information, please talk to your doctor. If you think your problem is serious, call your doctor right away.

This tool has been reviewed by doctors and is for general educational purposes only. It is not a substitute for medical advice. The information in this tool should not be relied upon to make decisions about your health. Always consult your family doctor with questions about your individual condition(s) and/or circumstances. Source: American Academy of Family Physicians. Family Health & Medical Guide. Dallas: Word Publishing; 1996.