

# Encopresis DSM-5 Criteria

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## What is encopresis?

Encopresis is a condition where a toilet-trained child (4 years or older) has bowel movements and leaks stool into their underwear, usually accidentally. It is also known as fecal incontinence or soiling.

The most common cause of encopresis is chronic constipation, where hard, dry stool collects in the rectum and colon. As newer stool is made, it can leak around the impacted stool, causing soiling. Children may also avoid having bowel movements due to pain from constipation, worsening the problem.

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## Diagnostic criteria

1. Repeated passage of feces into inappropriate places (e.g., clothing, floor), whether involuntary or intentional.
2. At least one such event occurs each month for at least 3 months.
3. Chronological age is at least 4 years (or equivalent developmental level).
4. The behavior is not attributable to the physiological effects of a substance (e.g., laxatives) or another medical condition except through a mechanism involving constipation.

### **Specify whether:**

#### **With constipation and overflow incontinence:**

There is evidence of constipation on physical examination or by history.

#### **Without constipation and overflow incontinence:**

There is no evidence of constipation on physical examination or by history.

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## Reference

American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). Pearson.