



Pain & Behavior What to Check First (Quick Guide for Families)

Behavior is communication. If your child's behavior suddenly worsens, screen for common sources of pain or discomfort and loop in your pediatrician.

Constipation consider this if you see:

- Aggression or self-injury; poor sleep; poor appetite
- Loose stools or poop accidents (stool may leak around a blockage)
- Posturing (pressing belly against furniture), smelly stools, streaks in underwear
- Urine accidents
- Definitive test: abdominal X-ray (KUB) can confirm severe constipation

Ear Infection consider if you see:

- Headbanging (from ear pain), unexplained crying/irritability
- Poor sleep and poor appetite

Sinus Infection or Headache consider if you see:

- Headbanging or self-injury linked to pain
- Light sensitivity

Strep Throat consider if you see:

- Fever (or no fever in some kids with immune differences)
- Headache or headbanging; vomiting; poor eating or food refusal
- Peeling skin on fingertips/toes; red sandpaper-like rash
- Protein-like or unusual breath odor

Tooth Pain consider if you see:

- Aggression or self-injury tied to pain
- Poor eating/food refusal; unexplained crying/irritability

Bone Pain (growing pains) consider if you see:

- Irritability; poor sleep; trouble walking or refusal to walk
- Often linked to mineral deficits (magnesium, potassium, calcium); discuss with your clinician

Reflux (GERD) consider if you see:

- Bad breath; chest pain; wearing of tooth enamel
- Poor sleep; poor swallowing; vomiting; worse when lying down