Blood stained nappy

This is always a scary symptom for parents and one guaranteed to earn a slot on the morning extras list – there are a wide range of causes and this review from the BMJ ‘10 minute consultation’ offers us a reminder of a sensible approach (BMJ 2012;344:e3496).

History

Whilst this is an alarming symptom, the review reminds us that the most common cause outside the neonatal period is constipation, irrespective of whether a fissure is present. The key job for us is to identify the sick children who need immediate attention, so as with most paediatric consultations, your first question is:

- Is this a well child?
- Is the bleeding associated with severe pain/dehydration/clinical anaemia/diarrhoea?
- Ask about bilious vomiting and abdominal distension which might suggest obstruction.
- Is this child thriving?
- Are there other long-standing symptoms e.g. reflux, colicky abdominal pain, constipation?
- What is the blood like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnoses to consider in a well child</th>
<th>Bright red, not mixed with stool</th>
<th>Bright red mixed with stool/mucus</th>
<th>Dark blood or black stools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constipation</td>
<td>Cows’ milk allergy (if early stage)</td>
<td>Iron supplements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anal fissure</td>
<td>Meckel’s diverticulum (if massive bleed) (Meckel’s diverticulum is a developmental abnormality where vestigial embryonic GI tissues remain in abdomen but outside GI tract)</td>
<td>Maternal cracked nipples, Meckel’s diverticulum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rectal polyps</td>
<td>Infective diarrhoea e.g. Campylobacter, Shigella, C. difficile</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bleeding disorder</td>
<td>Intussusception, Malrotation and volvulus (consider if also bilious vomiting)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meckel’s diverticulum (can present with large painless rectal bleed and shock)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oesophagitis (if significant upper GI bleed)</td>
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- Note: viral gastroenteritis is very rarely associated with bleeding.
- Is there any family history of bleeding disorder and has the child shown evidence of bleeding from elsewhere?
- Ask about a change of feeds e.g. breast to formula – may be first presentation of cows’ milk allergy (see article in the handbook for more about this!).

Examination and investigations

- Check vital signs – is there shock, anaemia or dehydration?
- Examine the abdomen – look specifically for:
  - Palpable stool in descending colon
  - Abdominal distension (in a well child with normal bowel sounds may be constipation but in a sick child +/- vomiting consider obstruction).
  - Sausage-shaped lump in right upper quadrant can sometimes be felt with intussusception.
  - Inspect the anal area for fissures/broken skin/rectal prolapse or severe nappy rash.
  - If infective diarrhoea is suspected, send stools for culture.
  - If cow’s milk allergy is suspected consider IgE test (though this will only be helpful in the context of IgE-mediated allergy, i.e. rapid onset of symptoms after consumption of offending food – most will be intolerance and a 2–6w exclusion diet may be diagnostically more useful – see article in online handbook on food allergy).
  - If there is vaginal bleeding or a very abnormal anus, consider the possibility of abuse.
Management

- Refer a sick child with rectal bleeding urgently!
- If there is frequent painless bleeding in a well child refer for paediatric review as they may need imaging to look for rectal polyps/inflammatory bowel disease.
- Refer if there is a history consistent with a bleeding disorder.
- If constipation or fissure are likely then treat constipation with laxatives (macrogol paediatric plain first line – see Online handbook for NICE on constipation).
- Topical anaesthetic jelly may help if there is a fissure.
- Consider a 2–6w trial of cow’s milk exclusion if allergy is suspected.

An approach to ‘the blood stained nappy’

- The most common cause of red blood on wiping or in the nappy not mixed with stool is constipation and anal fissure.
- Treat these aggressively with macrogol paediatric plain and topical anaesthetics.
- In the context of bloody diarrhoea send stool cultures for Shigella, Campylobacter, etc.
- Unwell children with rectal bleeding, abdominal pain +/- vomiting need urgent hospital assessment for surgical causes such as intussusception, malrotation and upper GI bleeding.
- If there has been a recent change in feeds, consider cows’ milk allergy especially if also skin rashes and a personal or family history of atopy. Do a 2–6w exclusion of cows’ milk to test the hypothesis.
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- 6 CPD credits in a lecture based format, with plenty of time for interaction, humour and video clips, to keep you focussed and awake.
- A printed copy of the relevant Handbook including the results of the most important research in primary care over the last 5 years and covering the subjects more extensively than possible in the course.
- 12 months subscription to [www.gpcpd.com](http://www.gpcpd.com).
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What’s not included? Our courses contain NO theorists, NO gurus, NO sponsors, NO reps on the day!

Just real life GPs who will be back at the coal face as soon as the course has finished.

[www.gp-update.co.uk](http://www.gp-update.co.uk)
The GP Update Course – our flagship course!

With the amount of evidence and literature inundating us, it can be hard to know which bits should change our practice, and how. Our GP presenters summarise and discuss the results of the most important new evidence and guidance, concentrating on what it means to you and your patients in the consulting room tomorrow.

Oxford Fri 30 Sep
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Cardiff Wed 5 Oct
Exeter Thur 6 Oct
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London Sat 8 Oct
Leeds Wed 12 Oct
Liverpool Thur 13 Oct
Manchester Fri 14 Oct
Birmingham Sat 15 Oct
Cambridge Tue 18 Oct
London Wed 19 Oct
Nottingham Thur 20 Oct
Inverness Wed 2 Nov
Edinburgh Thur 3 Nov
Glasgow Fri 4 Nov
London Fri 10 Mar
London Sat 11 Mar
Oxford Thur 16 Mar
Leeds Fri 17 Mar
Birmingham Sat 18 Mar
Bristol Wed 10 May
Exeter Thur 11 May
London Fri 12 May
London Sat 13 May
Newcastle Wed 17 May
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Manchester Fri 19 May
Birmingham Sat 20 May
Norwich Tues 23 May
Bedford Wed 24 May
London Thur 25 May
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Exeter Thur 3 Nov
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<th>City</th>
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<tr>
<td>Leeds</td>
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<td>Birmingham</td>
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<td>Bristol</td>
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<td>Cambridge</td>
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**Our Consultation Skills Courses**

One day small group courses designed for GPs, GP STs and General Practice Nurses.

The courses have a practical focus and lots of engaging exercises allowing delegates to rehearse the most effective consultation behaviours. But don’t worry, there won’t be any role playing in front of everybody!

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<td>London</td>
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**The Effective Consultation Course**

The Course focuses on behaviours which enhance effective use of time in the consultation. Efficient consultations reduce clinical risk and lower the risk of complaints and lawsuits. The course uses the rich evidence base on which consultation behaviours enhance effectiveness and how to go about learning them. We focus on actions and you will leave with many practical tips to use in your consulting room the following day.

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**The Medically Unexplained Symptoms Course**

A significant proportion of patients who present to us will turn out to have symptoms that are medically inexplicable. We all know that there is no magic solution with these patients and sometimes they leave us feeling defeated and not sure what to do. However, there is evidence which can help address the issue.

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<td>London</td>
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**Prices:**

**GP Update Course:**

GP £195 | GP Registrar £150 | Nurse £150

**All other courses:**

£225 or £210 for members of [www.gpcpd.com](http://www.gpcpd.com)

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- The Women’s Health Update Course
- The GP Cancer Update Course
- The GPN Update Course – For all General Practice Nurses
- The Pharmacist Update Course – For all Primary Care Pharmacists
- The Telephone Consultation Course
- The Effective Consultation Course
- The Medically Unexplained Symptoms Course

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I would like to come on the following course(s) (please write legibly!):

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- The Women’s Health Update Course .............................................................   (location).............................................................   (date).........................
- The GP Cancer Update Course .............................................................   (location).............................................................   (date).........................
- Lead. Manage. Thrive! .............................................................   (location).............................................................   (date).........................
- The Telephone Consultation Course .............................................................   (location).............................................................   (date).........................
- The Effective Consultation Course .............................................................   (location).............................................................   (date).........................
- The Medically Unexplained Symptoms Course .............................................................   (location).............................................................   (date).........................

I can’t attend a course but would like to order your Handbook or DVD

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- Cancer Update Handbook £70

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