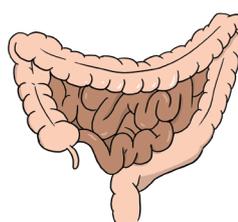




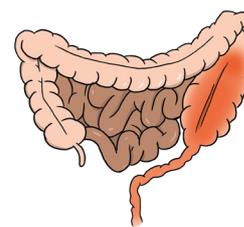
# Hirschsprung's disease

(her-sh-sprung)

Hirschsprung's disease is a disorder of the bowel where the nerve cells stop growing in the large intestine (colon). Without the nerve cells the bowel is unable to relax causing these large intestine to tighten and narrow making it difficult for poo to pass.



Normal



Hirschsprung's disease

## Symptoms

It is usually found as a newborn but sometimes it can be found in early childhood.

### Symptoms in newborns:

Greenish colour poo after 2 days of birth



Difficulty pooing or explosive poos



Poor feeding or vomiting

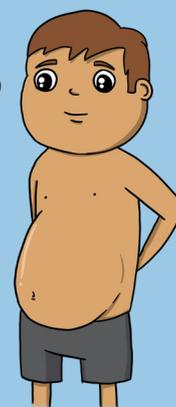


Swollen tummy and poor weight gain



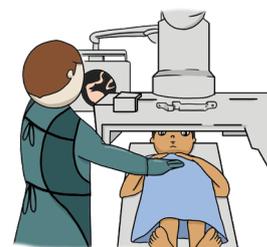
### Symptoms in older children:

- History of not being able to poo or having trouble pooing
- Poor growth
- Swollen abdomen



## Diagnosing

1. Contrast enema (en-a-ma) – an enema with special liquid is put into bub's bottom, the liquid coats the bowel wall which can be seen on x-ray.
2. Rectal biopsy – tiny pieces of the bowel are taken and looked at under the microscope to see if there are small lumps or ganglion cells.



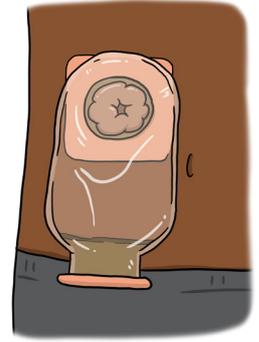
## Treatment

Surgery is needed to remove the affected part of the bowel. Sometimes a rectal wash out is needed before surgery to clear the bowels.

## There are 2 types of surgery:

- 1. Pull through** - the surgeon will remove the bad part of bowel and attach the remaining healthy bowel to the anus, so bub can poo normally.
- 2. Stoma** – the surgeon will bring the healthy bowel out onto the abdomen and make an opening for poo to pass through. Bub will need to wear a pouch over the stoma for the poo to drain into. Later on, pull-through surgery will be done and the **stoma will be closed**.

A few weeks after the pull-through, at your outpatient appointment parents will be taught how to do an anal stretch so the scar tissue doesn't tighten making it hard to poo.



### Good to know

- Children who are more unwell or have a longer part of affected bowel may need a stoma.
- A stomal therapy nurse will show you how to manage the stoma and help you to join the WA Ostomy Association for supplies.

## Side effects that may occur after pull through surgery:

### Inflammation of the remaining bowel (Enterocolitis)

Symptoms are:

Swollen tummy



Diarrhoea - explosive and bad smelling



Vomiting



Fever



Tired - no energy



Nappy rash –your stomal therapy nurse will yarn with you before you leave hospital.



If you see bub with any of these symptoms please see your GP, health clinic or go to emergency department. Bub may need antibiotic medicine, a bottom wash out and intravenous (IV) fluids.

## Life after the surgery

There may be ongoing constipation or incontinence problems. You may not notice any problems until you start toilet training bub. Talk to your GP or health clinic for advice.

For extra information please call the PCH Stomal Therapy Department on 6456 2222. You can also get support from Bowel Group for Kids INC.



Government of **Western Australia**  
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