

JUST FOR YOU

Remember to stay calm. Try not to react. Have a bag or bucket with cleaning materials used specifically for this purpose. We are not ignoring the person, but we will appear to be ignoring the behaviour. Using the same approach each time will help with reinforcing positive behaviours.

Clothing – some parents make use of bodysuits that delay access to undergarments, this provides time to redirect the individual.

<https://www.special-need-products.com/bodysuit-onesie.html#BackZipperOnesieBodysuits>

<https://www.sensorysmart.co.uk/zip-back-jumpsuits-257-c.asp>

USEFUL LINKS AND FURTHER READING:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/behaviour/smearing/all-audiences>

<https://specialkids.company/blogs/latest-news/what-you-need-to-know-about-faecal-smearing>

<http://kids-health.guru/scatolia/>

<https://www.eric.org.uk/Blog/tackling-problems-with-toilet-training-autistic-children>

<https://www.eric.org.uk/pdf-smearing>

<https://www.eric.org.uk/blog/stool-withholding-in-children-more-than-just-constipation>

<https://www.nhsggc.org.uk/kids/resources/ot-activityinformation-sheets/practical-advice-for-smearing/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9bumK4BHwM> (messy play)

<https://able2learn.com/products/dont-play-with-poop-social-story-basic-living-skills-8-pages.html>

SMEARING INFORMATION

HELPFUL ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

**The reason for faecal smearing can be medical,
sensory or behavioural.**

**This leaflet will provide you with useful some
hints and tips to help you understand and
manage faecal smearing.**

**You are not alone, many parents or carers
experiencing this behaviour from the people they
love/care for. It can cause anxiety and can effect daily
activities, outings and social interactions.**

Inside you will find some ways to help.



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MEDICAL REASONS FOR SMEARING

Constipation

Constipation can cause tummy and rectal pain. Impacted stools can lead to rectal digging (manual evacuation) which relieves pressure and can also meet a sensory need.

Pain/Discomfort (Abdominal/Rectal)

Haemorrhoids (due to excessive straining or withholding) can also cause pain and discomfort.

Infection

Gastroenteritis is also an infection that causes diarrhoea. Threadworm infections can cause itching and irritation around the anus that can increase digging and scratching in the area.

All of these symptoms can be treated by your GP so ruling these out in the first instance can be helpful and save time. What can you introduce:

Plenty of fluids and a varied healthy diet.

A healthy toileting regime.

Medication to address above issues.

Hand washing regime.

SENSORY REASONS FOR SMEARING

Smell

We cannot deny it, poo is smelly. We are all bombarded with smells of varying degrees throughout the day. Our senses and emotions are heightened by smell, so understandably, smearing has this same effect on senses.

Texture

The texture of poo can vary so it can be an exciting medium to play with. Rolling, spreading and squishing it can meet many sensory needs. We also need to think about the texture of toilet paper or poo against the skin. Is this a contributing factor?

Movement

The movement of the body while smearing also meets sensory needs. Eyes, mouth, fingers, hands, arms, tummy muscles and legs can all be used when immersed in this activity.

The bathing or showering routine that takes place afterwards may also meet a sensory need, reinforcing the behaviour. Having an established toileting regime can eliminate anxieties around personal care and the bathroom environment. What you can introduce:

Scented toys, creams & lotions, lip balms, aromatherapy oils on material .

Playdough, fidget toys, stress ball, finger paint, shaving cream, introduce marmite/peanut butter as an alternative substance, pasta shapes, and jelly. Wet wipes for cleansing.

Running, jumping, stair climbing, rolling on mat, crawling, swinging.

BEHAVIOURAL REASONS FOR SMEARING

Sensory

Escape/Avoidance

Attention

Tangible

(Wanting something)

Smearing meets a sensory need. Can this need be met with other more appropriate activities/resources?

Look at when the smearing happens, the environment, who is present, time of day and what is planned or has just happened. Is the individual trying to escape/avoid something? This can provide helpful information around trying to reduce/change the behaviour.

Attention is not "attention seeking". The person wants your company and to be engaged with YOU.

A tangible need could be a need for something. Have favourite items visible and easy to reach. Have healthy food and drink available and perhaps teach appropriate ways of asking for these items.

ALL BEHAVIOUR IS COMMUNICATION. What is the individual trying to tell us when engaging in this activity? Introducing alternatives or appropriate personalised distractions could help reduce this behaviour. What you could introduce:

Active hands, messy play, physical play, running, jumping.

Visual timetable, now and next board, picture cards, timers to show end of task.

How does the individual communicate, is everyone listening and responding appropriately? Teach appropriate ways in which to ask for things.

Toy boxes with preferred items within easy reach. Introduce signs or symbols to ask for food/drink.

These lists are not exhaustive and with help and support from your learning disability nurse and other professionals, an appropriate course of action can be explored that will meet the specific needs of the individual.