

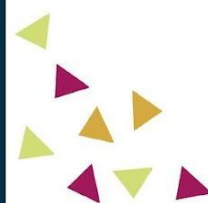
Introduction to Smearing Faeces

There may be many reasons why an autistic person smears their faeces. Reasons could include:

- Medical/ illness
- Sensory-seeking behaviour (seeking stimulation through their sense of smell, taste or tactile system)
- Reluctance to take part in hygiene routines such as wiping their bottom due to how it feels
- Fear around using the toilet
- Not understanding the process of going to the toilet
- Attention-seeking behaviour (it could be that the first time they did it they got a reaction that they enjoyed.)
- Compulsive, obsessive behaviour
- Seeking control over themselves and the environment

Thing to consider when supporting someone who smears

- Visit the GP and rule out medical conditions such as bowel problems or pain.
- Observe and learn - keep a detailed diary of when it happens, detailing where and who was involved. This way you can start to identify patterns of smearing behaviour and try to work out the triggers. For example, it could show that every Tuesday before school smearing happens. This could translate to anxiety because it's PE on a Tuesday, and the way that anxiety is handled is to smear.
- Try replacing the toilet paper with wet wipes or softer toilet paper to see if the texture of the toilet paper is the problem
- Write a story around going to the toilet, including why we need to do it and how. Maybe include where the faeces go when you use the toilet, as not knowing can give rise to anxiety and other toileting problems. Include photographs where possible.
- Look at clothing to reduce the smearing. Some parents use all-in-one suits. This will need careful consideration, particularly if you are engaging in toilet training.
- If you think the smearing is a sensory seeking behaviour, consider offering opportunities that will create the same sensation but in a more appropriate way. Some ideas include using play dough, shaving foam, gloop, finger painting, sand, mud, slime, add different flavours to offer different smells.

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- Think about your reaction to the smearing. If your response offers a big reaction try responding differently to avoid reinforcing the behaviour. If you think the smearing is taking place because a reaction is sought, ensure everyone involved is consistent in their approach: either ignoring, or not overreacting to the behaviour. The idea would be that over time they'll realise they are not getting the desired response and will stop doing it.
 - If there is a fear of toilets try using a portable toilet cover to provide some predictability.
 - Set up a toileting routine.