

# THE SCOOP ON POOP—AND PEE

It's not exactly table talk, and there's no polite way to bring it up. But most of us do wonder about what goes into the, well, toilet. The fact is, you can learn a lot about what's going right or wrong with your body by what comes out of it.

"There's a wide range of what's normal when it comes to bowel movements, or poop, and urine, or pee," says Kristin Pickerell, RN, Humana heart and kidney specialist. "But there are some things that need a call to your doctor."

## WHEN POOP MAY MEAN A HEALTH PROBLEM:

- » It's too liquid for more than a day, and you've gone more than four times in a day.
- » It's pencil thin (your intestines could be blocked) or pelletlike (can happen if you don't eat enough fiber).
- » You don't poop for more than four days.
- » It has a strong, foul smell for more than a day.
- » It has blood, which could be bright or black. Bright blood might be from hemorrhoids, but black blood can be a sign of bleeding inside you.
- » It's green, which can be caused by medicines, food, or bile (a fluid that helps you digest food).

## WHEN PEE MAY MEAN A HEALTH PROBLEM:

- » It's red or has a pink tinge. That could be a sign of blood, which you should never have in urine, Pickerell says.
- » It's murky, cloudy, or has a strong smell. These are signs of a urinary tract infection (UTI). Burning when you pee is another sign of a UTI. If not treated, UTIs can lead to kidney infection and kidney disease. So call your doctor immediately to stop the infection before it spreads. ■

## Humana HealthyInsight

### Look in Your Toilet to Learn About Your Health

You can generally keep on top of many health problems if you just take a quick peek at your poop and pee. Know your bowel and bladder habits, know your body, and know what's normal for you. Then call your doctor if you have a concern.

— Kristin Pickerell, RN, Humana heart and kidney specialist

Learn more about kidney health and bladder control with our *Classes to Go*. See back cover for details.

