

Diarrhea and vomiting

Occasionally your child will have loose stools. Breast-fed children usually have less formed or looser stools than formula-fed children. **Diarrhea** is having three or more bowel movements that are more loose or liquid than normal.

Vomiting is forcefully throwing up stomach contents. This is different from spitting up, which is bringing up a small amount of stomach contents with no force.

Diarrhea and vomiting can cause a child to lose fluids too fast. Your child must have fluids to avoid becoming dehydrated (losing too much water in his body).

IMPORTANT NOTE: When caring for your sick child, it is very important to wash your hands well and often. Also, wash your baby or toddler's hands regularly, and always before eating.

When your child has diarrhea or vomiting, you should call your clinic if:

- Diarrhea gets worse or does not improve within 24 hours.
- Diarrhea is watery and vomiting occurs more than four times.
- Stools have blood, mucus, or pus in them.
- Your child has severe stomach cramps, neck ache, or headache.
- Your baby has a fever above 100.4°F and is 3 months or younger.
- Your older baby has a fever above 102°F (39 C).
- Your child refuses to drink.
- Vomits for more than 12 hours for infants, or more than 24 hours for children under age 2.
- Is unable to eat solid foods within 24 hours of the first symptom.
- Your child is not urinating, is urinating in small amounts, or the urine is a dark color.

- Your child has no tears when crying.
- Your child's mouth is not moist.
- Your child is dizzy when standing up.

Diarrhea treatment

The most important treatment for diarrhea is giving your child fluids. Too much fluid at one time may make your child sick. Give small amounts of fluid every 15 minutes.

Fluids

- Give Pedialyte® or another type of pediatric electrolyte solution (children's rehydration liquid) to your child. These are sold without a prescription at your local drugstore.
- Do not use plain water — drinking nothing but water when your child has diarrhea can be harmful. Your child may have small amounts of water if he wants.
- Avoid soft drinks, fluids that contain a lot of sugar, undiluted juices, or fruit punch.
- For the first four to six hours, a 1-year-old should drink at least four ounces an hour or one ounce every 15 minutes. Older children need a little more fluid.
- Do not use the oral rehydration solution for more than two days without talking to your doctor.

Eating

- Slowly return to a regular diet. Foods that may be good for a child with diarrhea include starchy items like cereal, crackers, pasta, and potatoes, as well as bananas, applesauce, gelatin or Jell-O®, and yogurt.
- Children with mild diarrhea can continue with their regular food with more frequent nursing or just one additional bottle.

- Try to feed your child within 24 hours of the diarrhea.
- If you are breastfeeding, continue to breastfeed.
- If your child is taking formula, continue with the same formula.
- If your child is eating solid food, continue to give a regular diet.
- Avoid foods with a lot of sugar (like ice cream and sweetened cereals) and fried, fatty foods.
- Do not worry if you see bits and pieces of the food in your child's stools. Even if some of the food is not digested, your child is still getting nutrition.
- Remember, it may take two to four weeks for your child to return to his normal bowel movements.
- Talk to your clinic before you give your child ANY medication for diarrhea.

Vomiting treatment

- Give oral rehydration solution like Pedialyte® in very small amounts — two to three teaspoons every five minutes until the vomiting stops. Note: If your baby is younger than 3 months, call your clinic to determine how serious the problem is.
- After the vomiting stops, add the fluids and food as described in the diarrhea treatment above.
- Continue breastfeeding if you are breastfeeding.