

## Vomiting, Diarrhea, & Preventing Dehydration



Vomiting and diarrhea are common symptoms of many childhood illnesses, and are most often caused by viruses. At times, your child may experience both of these symptoms, while at other times one or the other may be present. Vomiting typically resolves in two days, while diarrhea can be slower to improve. The most important thing to watch for is dehydration – urinating less often, dry mouth or cracked lips, no tears when crying, and lethargy.

### How to handle diarrhea and vomiting for infants:

- If breastfeeding, attempt to continue on a regular schedule. Use clear liquids as a supplement.
- If your child is taking formula or milk, you may stop this for 24 hours if your child is not tolerating it well. Give clear liquids like Pedialyte and try small amounts of age appropriate foods like applesauce or crackers.

### How to handle diarrhea and vomiting for children age 1+ year:

- Start oral rehydration therapy by giving small amounts of fluid frequently.
  - Start with small sips (1 teaspoon) every 2 minutes. Try to avoid using a bottle to prevent giving too much at one time.
  - If tolerated, advance to ½ ounce fluid every 10-15 minutes, and then to 1 ounce every 10-15 minutes. If vomiting continues, try smaller amounts.
  - Avoid dairy products for 24 hours as they may not sit well in your child's upset tummy. Use clear fluids like Pedialyte, Infalyte, or ReVital which can be found at most grocery or drug stores.
  - Children over age 1 year can have Gatorade or fruit juices. Grape or pear juices work best. Avoid apple juice as it can worsen diarrhea.
  - If vomiting improves, continue giving fluids and slowly start to advance diet with bland foods. Try plain toast, crackers, or soup.
  - Pushing a regular diet is not as important as being sure your child stays hydrated. Try to restart a normal diet within 24 hours.
- Provide more fluids than usual to replace those lost in the more frequent stooling and vomiting.
- Avoid over the counter medications to control diarrhea, unless specifically prescribed by your child's provider.

### Call your child's doctor if:

- Your child's vomiting is not improved within 48 hours
- You suspect your child may be dehydrated
  - No urine output for 6-8 hours, or small amount of very dark colored urine
  - Very lethargic or irritable
- Your child has repeated vomiting despite small frequent feeds
- Your child is vomiting blood or green bile
- Your child has blood in the stool
- Your child has new or worsening abdominal pain
- Your child has new onset of fever greater than 102°F

