

Preventing Diarrhoea & Vomiting in Children 0-5 years



If your child has signs of dehydration and

- Becomes unresponsive
- Has unusually pale or mottled skin
- Has cold extremities
- Is breathing faster than usual

You need urgent help please phone **999** or go straight to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department.



If your child

- Appears to be getting worse or if you are worried
- Is not drinking
- Has signs of dehydration such as dry mouth, has not passed urine in the last 12 hours, is unusually sleepy or has sunken eyes
- Has blood in the stool (poo)
- Is drinking significantly less than normal and has had 6 or more bouts of diarrhoea and/ or 3 or more vomits in 24 hours

Please ring your GP surgery or **111** who will direct you to your local Urgent Care Centre.



If you have concerns about your baby/child especially if:

- Your child is younger than one year
- Your child had a low birth weight
- Or you have a concern about looking after your child at home

Please ring your GP Surgery, Health Visitor or **111**. Fast, free, 24/7 medical advice.

How to manage your child at home:

- Diarrhoea can often last between 7 and 10 days.
- Continue to offer your child their usual feeds, including breast or other milk feeds.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids and offer small amounts often.
- Do not give fizzy drinks and/or fruit juices.
- You may be advised to give an oral rehydration solution (eg; Dioralyte).
- If your child has other symptoms like a high temperature, neck stiffness, or rash please ask for advice from your GP or Health Visitor or call **111**.
- Your child may have stomach cramps; if simple painkillers do not help please seek further advice.
- If your child is due routine immunisations please discuss this with your GP or practice nurse, as they may not need to be delayed.
- If concerned call your GP surgery, Health Visitor or **111**.

Diarrhoea & Vomiting Advice Sheet for Children 0-5 years

About Gastroenteritis:

Severe diarrhoea and vomiting can lead to dehydration, which is when the body doesn't have enough water or the right balance of salts to carry out its normal functions. If the dehydration becomes severe it can be dangerous.

Children at risk of dehydration include, young babies, children who haven't been able to drink enough during their illness and children whose diarrhoea and vomiting has been severe.

How to prevent dehydration

If your child has gastroenteritis but is not dehydrated:

- Keep feeding them as normal (for example breast milk) and offer plenty of drinks.
- Fruit juice and fizzy drinks should be discouraged, because they can make diarrhoea worse.
- Your GP or Health Visitor may recommend that you give your child a special fluid known as Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) such as Dioralyte. This can help prevent dehydration from occurring. It is also used to treat children who have become dehydrated.
- You may be advised to give an Oral Rehydration Solution (Dioralyte) for up to 6 hours, after this time recommence normal diet as tolerated.

How long will my child be ill?

- Diarrhoea usually lasts for 5-7 days, improving during that time.
- Vomiting usually does not persist for more than 3 days.
- If your child's symptoms are taking longer than this to get better you should contact your GP or Health Visitor.



Preventing the spread of Gastroenteritis (diarrhoea & vomiting):

Hand washing is the best way to help stop other people getting gastroenteritis. You and/or your child should wash your hands with soap (liquid if possible) in warm running water and then dry them carefully:

- After going to the toilet
- After changing nappies
- Before touching food

Your child should not:

- Share his or her towels with anyone
- Go to school or any other childcare facility until 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting
- Swim in swimming pools until 2 weeks after the diarrhoea has stopped.

