

GUIDE FOR PARENTS

When your child has diarrhea

Diarrhea (loose, watery bowel movements) is a common problem in young children. It may be caused by a serious illness, but it usually results from a minor infection.

The danger of having diarrhea is becoming dehydrated (dried out). Your child may become very sick if he or she loses too much fluid and becomes dehydrated. Dehydration can usually be prevented by increasing the amount of liquid your child drinks. You may need to cut down on solid foods for 24 to 48 hours so that your child drinks more liquids.

The following suggestions may be helpful to you in caring for your child.

What to feed your child

Your child may eat and drink his or her usual foods.

Your child should eat or drink *only* the foods checked below.

For infants younger than 6 months:

Do Feed:

Breast Milk
Infant Formula
Oral Rehydration Solution
(Pedialyte, Infalyte)
Ice Pops

Do Not Feed:

Gatorade / Kool Aid
Tap Water
Undiluted Juices

For infants older than 6 months, toddlers, and children:

Do Feed:

Oral Rehydration Solution
(Pedialyte, Infalyte)
Ice Pops
Diluted Juices
Water

Do Not Feed:

Gatorade / Kool Aid
Milk

When to call the doctor

Call your child's doctor if any of the following occur:

- Your child suddenly develops a high fever (101^o F) taken under the arm.
- Stomach pain becomes severe or is more than occasional cramps.
- The diarrhea become bloody (more than a streak of blood).
- The diarrhea becomes more frequent or more severe.
- The child becomes dehydrated (see signs of dehydration below).
- No improvement occurs within 24 to 48 hours.
- You have any other concerns or questions.

Signs of dehydration

- The soft spot on top of your infant's head (fontanelle) is sunken.
- Your child has not urinated (passed water) for eight hours.
- Your child sheds no tears when he cries.
- Your child's mouth is dry or sticky to the touch.
- Your child's eyes are sunken, and the skin around the eyes is dark.
- Your child is less active than usual or is difficult to wake up.

Preventing infection of other family members

When diarrhea is caused by a germ that is contagious, you can help to protect other family members by following these suggestions:

- Keep your child away from other family members as much as possible.
- Use separate eating utensils for your child and wash them with hot soapy water before they are used by others.
- Wash your hands after touching your child, his eating utensils, or his soiled laundry.
- Wash your child's soiled laundry separately in hot water.
- Keep the toys that your child plays with separate and wash them with soap and water when possible.
- Use separate washcloths to clean your baby after diaper changes.
- Wash your hands well after each diaper change.
- Clean the toilet often.
- Your child may eat and drink his or her usual foods.
- Your child should eat or drink *only* the foods checked below.

CAUTION!

Do not use stool "binders" or antidiarrhea medicines for children under 6 years of age unless your child's doctor specifically directs you to do so. These medicines can be very dangerous if they are not used properly