

Diarrhoea & Vomiting Advice Sheet for Children



Diarrhoea and vomiting caused by gastroenteritis is common in children (Increased occurrence in children younger than 5 years). Severe diarrhoea and vomiting can lead to dehydration, which can be serious, but gastroenteritis can usually be managed at home with advice from healthcare professionals. Diarrhoea usually lasts for 5-7 days (can last up to 2 weeks), improving during that time. Vomiting usually lasts for 1-2 days and stops within 3 days. Please see your GP/contact 111 if the diarrhoea is lasting more than 7 days.

Most children with diarrhoea and / or vomiting get better very quickly, but some children can get worse. You need to regularly check your child and follow the advice below.

- Reduced consciousness
- Has unusually pale or mottled skin.
- Has cold hands and feet
- Is breathing faster than usual.

You need emergency help. Please phone 999 or go straight to the nearest A&E department.

If none of above but:

- Seeming unwell.
- Being irritable/ less active.
- Sunken eyes.
- Passing less urine than normal
- Dry mouth, is not drinking or increased thirst
- Has had 6 or more episodes of diarrhoea or 3 or more vomits in 24 hours
- Lost weight or skin appears loose

Please phone your GP practice or 111 to arrange a same day assessment (Telephone / video review or clinic appointment)

- If none of above but you need to speak to a healthcare professional for advice.

Please contact 111 or health visitor

Preventing Diarrhoea & Vomiting in Children



Preventing the spread

- Washing hands with soap (liquid if possible) in warm running water and careful drying are the most important ways to prevent



the spread of gastroenteritis.

- Hands should be washed after going to the toilet or changing nappies and before touching food.
- Towels used by children with gastroenteritis should not be shared.
- Children should not attend any school or other childcare facility while they have diarrhoea or vomiting caused by gastroenteritis and should not go back to school or other childcare facility until at least 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.
- Children should not swim in swimming pools for 2 weeks after the last episode of diarrhoea.
- Try to keep affected children separate from healthy children as much as possible



Things that you can do to help you child

- **(1)** If vomiting give little and often fluids, for example 10ml (2 tea spoons) every 10 minutes, use weak squash, oral rehydration solution or breast milk (can breast feed in short feeds or use expressed milk). Water can be given if only drink they take.
- Continue for 2 hours then increase volumes slowly, if further vomiting leave for an hour then start at point **(1)** again
- Once vomiting has stopped replace any fluid lost in diarrhoea with rehydration fluids.
- Your child can eat if they want to but don't force food, if they vomit again leave for an hour and start back at stage **(1)** again.
- Avoid fruit juices and fizzy drinks as they can make the diarrhoea worse.
- Stool samples are usually only required if diarrhoea lasts longer than 2 weeks, recent foreign travel or any blood or mucus in the stool.

