NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.℠

Helping Hand™

Rotavirus

Rotavirus (ROE-tuh-vie-russ) is a contagious illness caused by a virus. It can affect the digestive system and cause diarrhea (large amount of watery stools). It spreads very easily from one child to another.

Rotavirus occurs most often during the winter months. It is more common in infants and children up to about 2 years of age. Most infants have been immunized against rotavirus and are likely to have mild symptoms. The symptoms may come on suddenly and last up to 10 days. You can, however, make your child more comfortable and keep him or her from getting dehydrated (dried out) if vomiting or diarrhea develops.

Symptoms of Rotavirus

The first 3 days:

- Fever
- Runny nose
- Chest congestion
- Slight cough
- Nausea or vomiting

The 3rd to 10th days:

- Green, watery stools
- Mild stomach pain

Picture 1 It is very important to give your child plenty of liquids.

What to Do

Give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol®) for fever and discomfort. **If your child is under 3 months of age, be sure to check with your doctor first.** Give small amounts of liquids (1 to 2 ounces) every 20 to 30 minutes. This is very important to keep your child from getting dehydrated (Picture 1). **Do not give only water.**

Give only the liquids checked below:

❒ Pedialyte® or other similar electrolyte solution ❒ Jell-o water ❒ Popsicles

Do NOT give:

Orange juice, apple juice or prune juice

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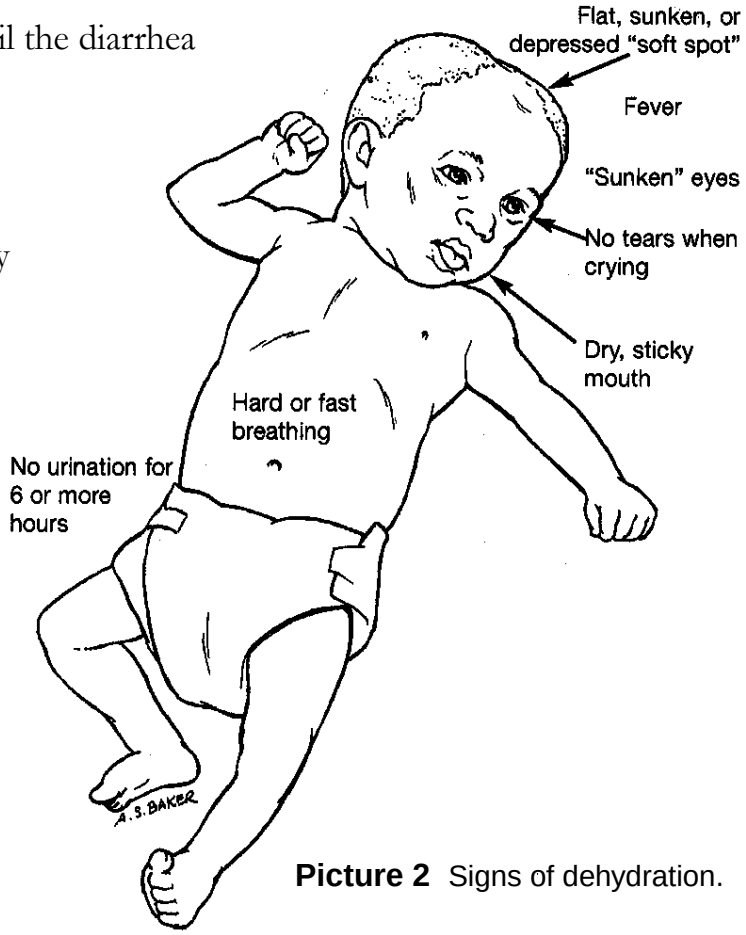
What to Do, continued

- Wash your hands before and after every diaper change or after helping your child in the bathroom.
- If your child is old enough to crawl or walk, wash his hands often to prevent spreading the virus to you or other children.
- Don't send him to school or childcare until the diarrhea has stopped.

Signs of Dehydration

Call your child's doctor if he or she shows any of these signs of dehydration (Picture 2):

- The inside of your child's mouth looks dry and sticky (lips may be dry or cracked on the outside, especially during winter).
- No urine (wet diapers) for 6 hours or more.
- Overly sleepy and hard to wake up.
- No tears when he cries.



Picture 2 Signs of dehydration.

When to Call the Doctor

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

- If your child is 3 months of age or younger and has a fever of 100.5°F or higher rectally.
- Child will not drink liquids and looks dehydrated (Picture 2).
- Blood in stools
- Severe stomach pain.

If you have any questions, be sure to ask your doctor or nurse, or call _____.