NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

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nationwidechildrens.org

VOMITING

Vomiting is most often caused by a minor infection. Some serious illnesses may cause vomiting. However, we do not feel that your child has any of these illnesses. Vomiting caused by an infection usually lasts only a couple of days. It can often be treated at home.

The main danger from vomiting is dehydration (de-hi-DRAY-shun), or being "dried out." Your child will need to drink plenty of liquids to prevent this. Choking is another danger. To prevent choking, when your child vomits, turn his head to the side or hold him in an upright position with the head forward.

WARNING: *Some medicines used for vomiting in older children or adults are very dangerous for young children.* ***DO NOT*** *use any medicine unless your doctor has told you to use it for* ***this child****.*

HOW TO GIVE LIQUIDS

When your child is vomiting very often, try giving **small amounts** of clear liquids often. For example, give 1/2 to 1 ounce (1 to 2 tablespoons) every 20 minutes for a few hours. For babies, give 1 to 2 teaspoonfuls every few minutes. This may reduce the vomiting. If he's able to take liquids this way, ***gradually increase the amount***. If your child still vomits, wait for one hour and try to give small amounts of liquid again.

CLEAR LIQUIDS YOU MAY GIVE

If your child is younger than 1 year old you may give Pedialyte® or another balanced electrolyte solution such as Infalyte®, Naturalyte®, Rehydralyte®, or KAO Lectrolyte® (powdered rehydration mix). These products are sold at most pharmacies without a prescription. Pedialyte is even good for older children. **For an older child you may give the following:**

- Soda (pop) - **diluted 3-to-1 with water.**
- Ice Popsicles
- Kool-Aid - **diluted 3-to-1 with water.**
- Tea with sugar
- Flavored gelatin cubes

DO NOT give your child **undiluted** fruit juices, or diet candy or gum, since these may make your child feel worse. Do not give broth soups.

FEEDING YOUR CHILD

When children are vomiting they usually don't feel like eating solid food. If your child feels like eating, it won't hurt him, but he must also drink plenty of liquids. Children who don't feel like eating food still need to drink plenty of liquids to keep from getting dehydrated. After about 6 to 8 hours of giving clear liquids, try to get your child to start eating some food.

Picture 1 Give liquids to prevent dehydration.

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SOLID FOODS TO NIBBLE ON

After your child is able to take clear liquids, start to give small amounts of solid foods that your child likes. Avoid foods that are high in sugar, such as candy and cookies, and very greasy foods.

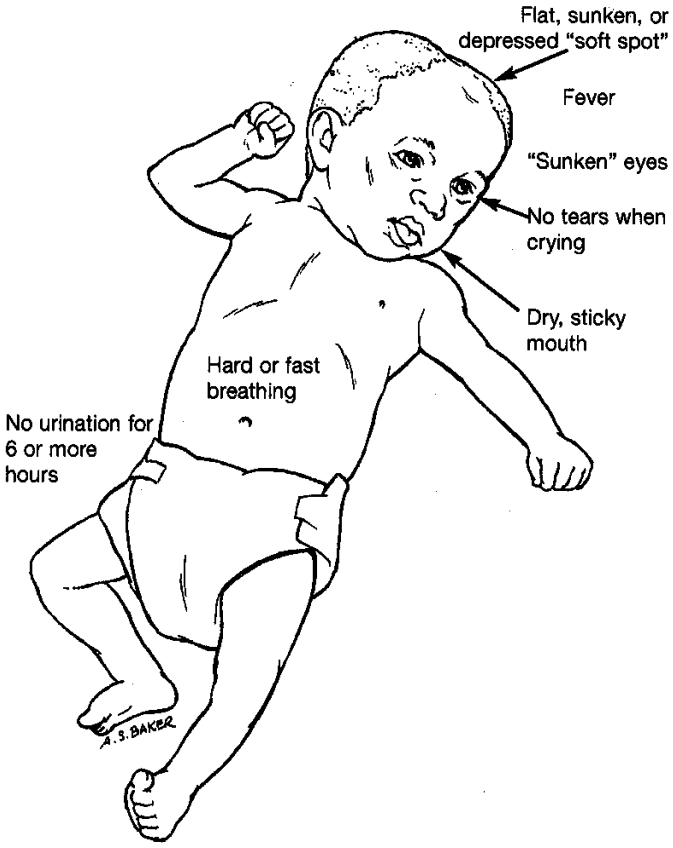
WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR

Call your child's doctor if you think your child is getting worse, or if:

- There is no improvement in 24 hours.
- Fever for more than 72 hours.
- Your child vomits blood or what looks like "coffee grounds."
- Vomiting gets more severe or happens more often.
- Child is lethargic (hard to awaken).
- Child acts confused or doesn't know what he's doing.
- Constant abdominal pain (tummy ache).
- Child seems to be getting dehydrated (see below).

Signs of Dehydration (Picture 2):

- Child does not urinate for 6 or more hours.
- No tears when he cries.
- Mouth feels dry or sticky.
- Breathing is hard or fast.
- Eyes look "sunken," skin around eyes is dark
- If your child is an infant and the "soft spot" on the top of his head is flat, sunken, or "pulls in."



Picture 2 Signs of dehydration.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF INFECTION

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

- Make sure your child washes his or her hands after using the toilet.
- Use separate eating utensils for your child. Wash the utensils with hot soapy water before others use them.
- Wash your hands after touching your child, his eating utensils, or his soiled laundry.
- Wash your child's soiled laundry separately with hot water.
- Keep toys separate. Wash them with hot, soapy water.
- Use a separate washcloth to clean your baby after each diaper change. Dispose of the diaper in a diaper pail.
- Wash your hands well after each diaper change.
- Clean the toilet often.

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