

Diarrhea

Diarrhea (loose, watery bowel movements) is a common problem of young children. Diarrhea may be caused by a serious illness, but usually it is only the result of a minor infection.

The danger of your child having diarrhea is that he can become dehydrated (dee-HY-dray-ted). Children can get very sick if they lose too much fluid and get dehydrated (dried out). Dehydration can usually be prevented by increasing the amount of liquid your child drinks. You may need to give extra liquids for a few days, along with your child's regular foods.

We have examined your child and feel that the diarrhea can be treated at home. Please follow the advice checked below:

- Your child may eat and drink his usual foods.
- If your child is getting dehydrated:

For Babies Younger than 12 Months:

Do Feed:

- Breast milk or infant formula
- Pedialyte® or other similar electrolyte solution
- Other _____

Do Not Feed:

- Juices
- Kool-Aid®
- Gatorade®, soda
- Jello water



Picture 1 Follow your doctor's orders for giving liquids

For Children and Toddlers Older Than 12 Months:

Do Feed:

- Solid foods appropriate for the child's age
- Pedialyte[®], Infalyte[®], Naturalyte[®] Rehydralyte[®], or KAO Lectrolyte[®] (powdered rehydration mix)
- Popsicles or Pedialyte popsicles
- Water
- Other _____

Do Not Feed:

- Jello water
- Juices
- Soda or sweetened drinks

Caution

Do not use stool "binders" or anti-diarrhea medicines for children, unless your doctor specifically orders it for your child. **These medicines can be very dangerous if they are not used properly.**

When to Call the Doctor

Call your child's doctor if there is:

- High fever – over 101°F axillary (under the arm) that comes on suddenly.
- Severe stomach pain (more than occasional cramps).
- Bloody diarrhea (more than a streak of blood).
- Diarrhea that is more frequent or more severe.
- Dehydration (see Signs of Dehydration below).
- No improvement in 24 hours.

Signs of Dehydration

- Infant's soft spot (fontanelle) on top of his head "sinks in."
- Child has not urinated for 6 hours.
- There are no tears when he cries.
- Child's mouth becomes dry or feels sticky when touched.
- Child's eyes are sunken and the skin around the eyes is dark.
- Child is less active than usual or is difficult to wake up.

Skin Care

You may need to change your child's diapers more often. Diaper rash cream may be used to protect the skin while your child has diarrhea.

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:

- 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.



Picture 2 Good hand washing is **very** important. Make sure your child washes his or her hands after using the toilet.

If you have any questions, please call your doctor, the Primary Care Clinic at (614) 722-5750, or _____.