Vomiting

Vomiting is most often caused by a minor infection. Some serious illnesses may also 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 (Picture 1). 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** give your child any medicine unless your doctor has told you to use it for **this child**. The doctor may give you a medicine to help relieve your child’s vomiting.

**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 teaspoons every few minutes. This may reduce the vomiting. If your child is able to take liquids this way, *gradually increase the amount*. If he or she still vomits, wait for one hour and try to give small amounts of liquid again.

**Feeding your child**

When children are vomiting, they usually do not feel like eating solid food. If your child feels like eating, it will not hurt him, but it is most important that he drink plenty of liquids. This will keep your child from getting dehydrated. After about 6 to 8 hours of giving clear liquids, try to get your child to start eating some food.
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**Clear liquids you may give**

**Children younger than 1 year of age:**
- 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.

**Children older than 1 year of age:**
- Pedialyte® (any flavor)
- Ice popsicles
- Water
- Flavored gelatin cube

**DO NOT give children of any age:**
- Undiluted fruit juice
- Diet candy or gum
- Broth-based soups.

These liquids and foods will only make your child feel worse.

**Daily fluid amounts for your child based on weight**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight in Pounds</th>
<th>Minimum Daily Fluid</th>
<th>Electrolyte Solution with Diarrhea or Vomiting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-10 pounds</td>
<td>10 ounces</td>
<td>16 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 pounds</td>
<td>15 ounces</td>
<td>23 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 pounds</td>
<td>25 ounces</td>
<td>40 ounces</td>
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<tr>
<td>21-28 pounds</td>
<td>28 ounces</td>
<td>44 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-35 pounds</td>
<td>32 ounces</td>
<td>51 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36+ pounds</td>
<td>38 ounces</td>
<td>61 ounces</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Solid foods you can give

After your child is able to take clear liquids, start to give small amounts of solid foods that he likes to nibble on. 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.
- There is 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 wake up).
- Child acts confused or does not know what he is 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 vomiting is caused by a germ that spreads easily (contagious), you can help 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 them in hot, soapy water after using them.
- Wash your hands after touching your child, his eating utensils, his diapers, or his soiled laundry.
- Keep your child’s laundry and toys separate. Wash them in hot, soapy water.
- Use clean wipes or washcloths for each diaper change. Put diaper in the diaper pail or trash immediately.

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