

Vomiting and Diarrhea (Gastroenteritis)

Vomiting, abdominal cramping and diarrhea are common symptoms of a viral infection, sometimes called the “stomach flu”. This germ irritates the lining of the stomach or bowel and prevents normal function of these organs. Dehydration is the most common complication of vomiting and diarrhea, and can be a serious problem in those over 60 years of age.

Since most intestinal infections are caused by viruses, antibiotics do not help. The aim of treatment is to prevent dehydration (losing too much water from your body). A clear liquid diet will provide needed fluids and allow the stomach and intestines to rest and recover.

WHAT TO DO

1. Follow a clear liquid diet for the first 12 hours, or until the diarrhea and vomiting stops. Drink fluids such as:
 - water
 - crushed ice
 - Gatorade® bottle
 - Pedialaps®
 - Jello, diluted with extra water
 - soft drinks (allow to stand uncovered until fizz² is gone)
 - broth
 - Popsicles®
 - weak
2. Start with small amounts, (1-2 ounces) each hour, and slowly increase the liquids if the vomiting and diarrhea slows down. Larger amounts of liquids in the early part of your illness may actually increase vomiting.
3. Don't force liquids. Take only what you can drink comfortably.
4. Add the following foods slowly as symptoms subside (usually in 24-48 hours):
 - applesauce
 - strained or ripe bananas
 - soda crackers
 - rice cereal made with water
 - dry toast, bread
 - poached or boiled eggs
 - banana
 - other bland foods
 - Campbells chicken noodle soup

Continue to drink extra fluids

5. Add small quantities of your normal diet when symptoms are gone.
6. Avoid the following products until you feel completely well:
 - Milk and milk products, including ice cream
 - Very spicy, acidic or fried foods
 - Raw fruits and vegetables
 - High fiber cereals
 - Alcohol
 - Coffee
7. You may feel like resting more, especially if you have fever and/or muscle aches.

CONTACT HEALTH SERVICES at 726-8155 if any of the following conditions occur:

- No sign of improvement in 24 hours
- Signs of dehydration appear:
 - Decreased urination
 - Dry mouth
 - Thirst
 - Listlessness or lethargy
 - Dizziness or light-headedness
 - Severe localized abdominal or rectal pain that does not go away
 - Blood in vomit
 - Blood in bowel movements
 - A temperature over 102°

WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY to avoid picking up or passing along germs that cause gastroenteritis.