

# Diarrhea and Dehydration

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Diarrhea is usually more annoying than dangerous. Most diarrhea is viral and just needs time to work itself out. Uncontrollable, persistent diarrhea however can be serious problem. Make sure you call our office if you have any concerns!

## Your Goals in caring for a child with diarrhea:

- Keep the child from dehydrating
- Keep the child out of the ER
- Prevent other family members from getting diarrhea
- Get child back to a normal diet as soon as possible

## Our tips for feeding a child who is having diarrhea:

- Studies have shown that big changes in diet during diarrhea will only prolong the diarrhea. Try to keep feeding the child his regular diet with just the few changes below.
- Do not allow your child to have any juice (apple or other fruit juice, Juicy Juice, punch, etc). It will make the diarrhea worse. Pedialyte and water are fine.
- Milk is also usually okay if your child has diarrhea. Sometimes a child may seem worse after drinking milk. A lactose-free milk (soy milk, Lactaid) may help in this case. If your child is on formula, try a lactose-free soy formula (Prosobee, Isomil).
- The traditional BRAT Diet (Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, Toast) will not shorten the duration of diarrhea, but it is certainly easy to keep down. Try starchy easy to digest foods like these, plus crackers, toast, pasta and Jello. Try to stay away from fatty, spicy, and greasy foods (French fries and chicken nuggets).
- Diarrhea can take anywhere from a day to a couple weeks to resolve. As long as your child appears well hydrated and has an appetite, he'll be fine.

## If your child shows signs of dehydration, call our office immediately. These signs are...

- Pale skin, blotchy extremities
- Sunken dry eyes, or a sunken "soft spot" in babies
- Dry lips, dry tongue
- Lack of tears when crying
- Decreased urine output (less than every 5-6 hours), dark urine
- Rapid resting heart beat and poor energy

## Other reasons to call the doctor:

- Blood or mucus in stool
- Severe cramping
- High fevers

## Other important information about vomiting and dehydration:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap to prevent the spread of vomiting and

diarrhea.

- Medicines like Immodium, Keopectate, and Pepto Bismol are not effective and may be dangerous for children with diarrhea.
- If diarrhea and vomiting are occurring together, your child is at serious risk for dehydration.
- Your child should not go back to school or daycare until the diarrhea stops.

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