

When should I contact a doctor?

If your baby or child:

- has sunken eyes and / or a sunken soft spot
- is unresponsive and very sleepy
- is breathing fast
- has not passed urine in 12 hours or
- has lots of blood in his or her poo, bright green vomit or is in severe pain

You need urgent help.

Call 999 or go straight to your nearest Emergency Department.

If your baby or child:

- has diarrhoea which lasts more than two weeks
- has not tolerated any food or drink except ORS for more than two days
- is getting worse or
- has signs of dehydration

You need to see a doctor or nurse today.

Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 by ringing 111 for either advice or to access a GP when your surgery is closed.

If your baby or child:

- is passing urine in usual amounts
- has a moist mouth and warm hands and feet and
- has a normal strong cry, and is content and smiling

You can look after your baby or child at home.

Follow the advice given in this leaflet about what to do at home.

Diarrhoea & Vomiting (Gastroenteritis)



Information for parents, guardians and carers

Signs and symptoms

Acute gastroenteritis, or a tummy bug, is one of the most common illnesses in childhood.

The most common symptoms are:

- sudden attack of diarrhoea (runny poo)
- vomiting
- loss of appetite
- fever and
- stomach ache

There is no cure for gastroenteritis but it will get better on its own. A small number of children become dehydrated whilst they have gastroenteritis. Younger babies and children are most at risk.

Signs of dehydration are:

- dry lips, eyes, mouth
- drowsy
- excessive thirst
- pale colour
- sunken eyes
- less urine passed
- cold hands and feet
- fast breathing and
- sunken soft spot (in babies)

How to treat gastroenteritis

If your child has no signs of dehydration, he or she can be cared for at home.

If your child has diarrhoea only:

- continue with a normal diet. Give him or her light dry food such as toast, crackers, porridge or pasta.
- you should continue breastfeeding
- use oral rehydration solution (ORS) drinks as a supplement to his or her usual drinks and
- give your child a drink of ORS after each runny poo

If your child has both vomiting and diarrhoea:

- withhold his or her normal diet
- don't give fizzy drinks or fruit juice
- if there are signs of dehydration, see a health professional and
- if there are no signs of dehydration, use ORS at home – give small sips every five minutes

Oral rehydration solution (ORS)

Oral rehydration solution is specially formulated to replace lost fluid quickly. It contains salt and sugar, which water does not.

It can be bought at a chemist or supermarket, and common brands are Dioralyte™ and Gastrolyte®. The solutions can be diluted with weak squash to make them taste better for children.

Preventing gastroenteritis

Most viruses that cause gastroenteritis are contagious. Your child may have been contagious before they began to show symptoms of vomiting or diarrhoea, and therefore spread may have already happened.

To try to prevent further spread of the virus:

- wash your hands regularly, especially after changing nappies or going to the toilet
- sterilise bottles and utensils well
- your child should not attend school, nursery or child care until they have no symptoms of vomiting or diarrhoea for 48 hours
- your child should not swim in swimming pools for two weeks after they have had diarrhoea
- your child should use his or her own towel while unwell, which should be washed at 60°C regularly and
- avoid kissing contact with people you know are unwell