

## Vomiting, Diarrhea & Dehydration

### Vomiting/diarrhea illness

What is a "stomach bug"?

- A stomach bug is usually caused by a virus, which can cause some or all of these symptoms: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and stomach cramping.
- Treatment is mostly **supportive care**, helping your child manage symptoms while their body fights off the illness.
- Vomiting typically lasts **1-3 days**; diarrhea can last **up to 10 days**.
- The main concern is **dehydration**, when your child loses more fluid than they take in.

### How to hydrate

Keeping your child hydrated at home

**Best choice:** Oral rehydration solution (ORS) like Pedialyte® replaces fluids and electrolytes lost through vomiting and diarrhea.

- After vomiting, wait **30-60 minutes**, then offer small sips, about 1 teaspoon (5 mL) every 5 minutes. Gradually increase if tolerated.
  - Avoid large amounts at once. Small and often is the key.
  - Avoid sugary drinks (soda, juice, sports drinks) as they can worsen diarrhea.
  - Avoid dairy products in children over 1 year until their stomach feels back to normal.
  - If your child is taking in at least **half their normal daily fluids**, they should be able to stay hydrated.
  - **Under 1 year:** breast milk or formula is fine if tolerated. If not, offer Pedialyte® in small volumes.
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- For diarrhea: continue regular feeding, do not withhold food. Return to a normal diet as soon as tolerated.
  - Change diapers promptly and apply barrier cream (e.g., zinc oxide) to prevent diaper rash.

### Go to the ER

If your child has any of the following

- Limp, unresponsive, or cannot be woken up
- **Signs of severe dehydration:** no urine in 8+ hours, sunken eyes or soft spot, no tears, very dry mouth
- Blood in stool or vomit
- Green or yellow (bile-colored) vomit
- Severe or constant belly pain, or a swollen, hard belly
- Vomiting after a head injury
- Vomiting lasting **more than 24 hours** (12 hours for infants under 2 months), or diarrhea lasting **more than 7 days**
- You are worried about your child's breathing or overall condition