

Diarrhoea and vomiting in Children

Preventing dehydration

It is important your child drinks enough to prevent dehydration. Keep offering small amounts of fluids frequently. If your child vomits immediately after milk feeds try water, dilute squash or ORS (oral rehydration solution). If they are reluctant to drink you can try feeding fluids on a spoon. Older children can be offered ice to suck. Do not give your child fruit juice or fizzy drinks.

If your child refuses to drink at all or repeatedly vomits immediately after drinking ask for advice from a doctor again. If the fluids stay down for 15-20 minutes before your child vomits some will be absorbed, but it is very important to keep offering more fluid after each vomit and after each large watery stool.

Once the vomiting settles your child can eat and drink normally. There is no benefit in diluting milk feeds. Diarrhoea may get worse when your child starts eating but this will settle after a few days.

On average vomiting will last 2-3 days while diarrhoea may continue for 1-2 weeks. It is best to avoid fruit juices and fizzy drinks during this time.

Oral rehydration solution

The doctor may prescribe oral rehydration solution. This is a drink containing some extra ingredients to help prevent dehydration, but some children do not like to drink it. If your child will not take it try other fluids instead.

Signs of dehydration

Your child should be examined again by a doctor if they appear to be becoming more unwell.

Some signs to look out for:

- Reduced number of wet nappies
- Becoming lethargic and sleepy
- Sunken eyes
- Dry mouth
- Pale, mottled skin
- Cold hands and feet

Your child should also be seen again if the diarrhoea and vomiting are not settling, if they have persistent fever, or if you have concerns that they are “not right”.

Preventing spread

Diarrhoea and vomiting can be very easily spread to other people. The single most important thing to prevent spread is careful hand washing with soap and warm water. This is particularly important after going to the toilet or changing nappies and before touching food.

Your child should use their own towel, including for hand washing.

Your child should not attend any school or day care setting until 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.

Your child should not go swimming until 2 weeks after the last episode of diarrhoea.

The advice in this leaflet is based on the NICE clinical guidelines for the management of diarrhoea and vomiting in children under five years of age issued April 2009.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help. If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that you may need to leave a voicemail message, but we aim to return your call within one working day.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.

For additional medical advice, if your symptoms or condition worsens:

Contact your GP

NHS 111:

Get help with your symptoms, NHS111:
Information to help you manage your health:

Telephone 111

<https://111.nhs.uk/>
www.nhs.uk

In an emergency telephone 999

Emergency Department (A&E)
Alexandra Hospital
Woodrow Drive
Redditch B98 7UB

Tel: 01527 512030

Minor Injury Unit
Kidderminster Hospital
Bewdley Road
Kidderminster DY11 6RJ

Tel: 01562 513039

Emergency Department (A&E)
Worcestershire Royal Hospital
Charles Hastings Way
Worcester WR5 1DD

Tel: 01905 760743