



Information for patients, relatives and carers

Gastroenteritis in Children

Most gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and vomiting) is caused by viral infections and will get better without any treatment. The most important thing is to have lots of fluids and avoid dehydration.

How can I look after my child?

- Vomiting usually settles within one to two days and diarrhoea within five to seven days (though it can last up to two weeks). Seek help from your GP if symptoms continue beyond this time.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids - little and often. Ideally Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) e.g. Dioralyte which can be purchased over the counter. Fruit juice and fizzy drinks should be discouraged as they can worsen the child's diarrhoea.
- Follow advice from your GP on how much fluid the child needs.
- Record the amount of fluid taken and number of episodes of diarrhoea or vomiting.
- Hand washing for you and your child with liquid soap before eating and handling food and after using the toilet is the best way to stop gastroenteritis from spreading.

After care:

Once your child is rehydrated and no longer vomiting:

- Reintroduce their usual food.
- If dehydration recurs, start giving ORS again.
- Anti-diarrhoeal medicines should not be given to children.

Your child should not:

- Share their towels with anyone.
- Go to nursery/day-care/school or any other childcare facility whilst they have diarrhoea and vomiting or for 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting.
- Swim in swimming pools until two weeks after the diarrhoea has stopped.

Below is a traffic light system for gastroenteritis to help guide action you may need to take:

	<p>If the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes difficult to rouse / unresponsive • Becomes pale and floppy • Is finding it difficult to breathe • Has cold hands and feet • Has diabetes 	<p>You need urgent help</p> <p>Please phone 999 or go to the nearest A&E</p>
	<p>If the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seems dehydrated, drowsy, or passing less urine than normal • Has blood in the stool or constant tummy pain • Has stopped drinking or breastfeeding • Becomes irritable or lethargic • Their breathing is rapid or deep • Is under three months old 	<p>You need to contact your GP or nurse today or call NHS 111</p>
	<p>If none of the above features are present, most children with diarrhoea and/or vomiting can be safely managed at home.</p> <p>However, some children are more likely to become dehydrated: children younger than one year old or low birth weight.</p> <p>If you still have concerns, please contact your GP or call NHS 111.</p>	<p>Self-Care</p> <p>Using advice in this leaflet you can provide the care a child needs at home.</p>

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you require this information in a different language or format, for example Braille, large print, Easy Read or audio, please ask the staff who are looking after you.

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