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## Diarrhea and/or Vomiting for Children and Breastfeeding Infants and Children

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### What causes diarrhea and/or vomiting?

There are many causes. The most common is a virus.

The first signs are high fever and vomiting. The person then starts to pass watery stools called diarrhea.

There are a lot of germs in the stool and/or vomit so be careful when cleaning up and wash your hands well and often.

Other less common causes of diarrhea and/or vomiting are bacteria or parasites. Your doctor or health care provider will assess and determine the cause.



### What is dehydration?

Dehydration is a problem caused by diarrhea and/or vomiting. Dehydration is a lack of fluid in the body. A body needs water and salt to survive.

Diarrhea and vomiting that is not looked after the right way can lead to serious health problems and sometimes death. For example, babies, infants and children need to be watched carefully. Call your child's health care provider or seek medical advice when your child has diarrhea or vomiting.

### What are signs of dehydration?

Signs of dehydration include:

- decreased amount of urine – less than 4 wet diapers a day
- no tears when crying
- dry skin, mouth and tongue
- faster heart beat
- sunken eyes
- skin colour changes – skin may look grey
- sunken soft spot on the top of a baby's head
- slightly elevated temperature



## Oral Rehydration

Oral rehydration is putting fluids back into the body. Oral rehydration solutions are exact mixtures of water and important nutrients. These solutions are still absorbed by the body even when vomiting.

You can buy oral rehydration solutions at the pharmacy (drug store) in ready-to-serve liquid preparations and special frozen products.

Talk to the pharmacist about the best product to get such as Pedialyte™ and Pedialyte Freezer Pops™. This depends on the age and size of the infant or child with diarrhea and/or vomiting.



### If you are breastfeeding:

- Feed on demand or when your child wants to suck.
- Continue to offer the food your child normally eats.
- Read more on the back page of this handout.

### If you are formula feeding:

- Do not dilute or water down the formula.
- Continue formula feeding and offer the foods your child normally eats.

## Food and Drinks to Avoid

- ✗ fruit juice or sweetened fruit drinks
- ✗ fruit except applesauce and bananas
- ✗ carbonated drinks such as pop or soda
- ✗ sweetened tea, broth or rice water
- ✗ dairy products such as milk, cheese, yogurt and ice cream for 3 days
- ✗ spicy foods such as curry, pepper, chili, and pizza
- ✗ high fibre foods such as corn, cabbage and bran



## **Remember:**

- If frequent diarrhea is occurring, do not take or offer plain water. Drinking water only may lead to low blood sugar or low sodium levels in the body and this can be dangerous.
- When able, begin adding food such as dry toast, crackers, chicken noodle soup or rice soup in small amounts. You can add salt to these foods if diet allows.
- Slowly increase the type and amount of food. Then try adding cooked potatoes, pasta, rice, skinless chicken, applesauce and bananas.
- Continue to have only small amounts of food every hour or so.
- It can take up to 10 days or longer to go back to a regular bowel pattern.

## **When to contact your doctor or health care provider:**

**For babies, infants and children, contact your doctor or health care provider when your child has:**

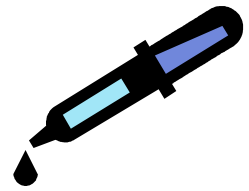
- diarrhea or vomiting and is less than 6 months old
- bloody or black stools
- vomiting after 4 to 6 hours
- diarrhea and/or vomiting and a fever over 38.5 C or 101.5 F
- signs of dehydration
- stomach pains that get worse

**Contact your doctor or health care provider if you are worried about your child's health.**

## **When your child is not breastfeeding or formula feeding well, offer oral rehydration solution:**

- **Baby 6 months or younger:** give 30 to 90 ml (1 to 3 ounces) every hour
- **Baby or child 6 to 24 months:** give 90 to 125 ml (3 to 4 ounces) every hour
- **Child 2 years and over:** give 125 to 250 ml (4 to 8 ounces) every hour

If your baby or child refuses the oral rehydration fluid by cup or bottle, use a medicine dropper, small teaspoon or let him or her suck on a Pedialyte Freezer Pop™ or freezie type product.



If your child continues to vomit, stop feeding normal food and give him or her oral rehydration solution by spoon, dropper or popsicle. Give 15 ml (1 tablespoon) every 10 to 15 minutes until the vomiting stops. Increase the amount slowly until your child can drink and not vomit. If vomiting does not stop in 4 to 6 hours, contact your health care provider and go to the hospital.

## **As your baby, infant or child recovers:**

### **For diarrhea:**

Keep giving the oral rehydration solution until the diarrhea is less frequent and more normal in volume and pattern for your child

### **For vomiting:**

When there has been 4 hours or more between episodes of vomiting or vomiting has stopped:

- continue breastfeeding on demand
- start formula feeding or regular feeding again in small, frequent feedings