

Diarrhea

What is it?

- An increase in the amount of loose or liquid stools (poop).
- Diarrhea can happen from an infection or other reasons:

Infection

- Many germs such as viruses, parasites and bacteria
- Certain medications such as antibiotics

Other reasons

- Problems digesting food and drinks
- Laxative use

- Diarrhea sometimes happens with other problems such as nausea, vomiting, stomach pain or fever.
- Stool (poop) has to be tested to see if an infection is causing the diarrhea.
- If diarrhea continues for more than a few days, it can cause dehydration and lead to serious health problems. Dehydration happens when your body loses too much fluid, important salts and minerals.

How is it spread?

- Diarrhea from infections is spread most often by putting something in your mouth that has been contaminated with the bowel movement of an infected person.
- Diarrhea for other reasons is not spread person-to-person.

Is there treatment for it?



- If you develop on-going problems with diarrhea, fever and/or stomach or abdominal pain, seek medical attention; contact your doctor, Urgent Care or hospital Emergency Department. You want to prevent severe problems related to a possible infection. Tell the doctor that you were recently seen for diarrhea.
- Drink lots of fluids, rest and eat a well-balanced diet.
- Treatment depends on the reason for the diarrhea or the type of infection.

What can be done to prevent the spread of it?

- Clean your hands with hand sanitizer or soap and water well and often. Use soap and water if hands are visibly soiled or greasy.
- Take all medications as directed by your doctor or health care provider.
- If you are in the Emergency Department or admitted to the hospital, you may need to go in Contact Precautions.
- If you are at home:
 - clean your hands well and often
 - keep your bathroom and kitchen clean

**Stop the spread of germs and infection.
Clean your hands.**

