

Vomiting and Diarrhea

Diarrhea is a common childhood illness that usually lasts from three to seven days and then is over. The major concern with diarrhea and vomiting is that so much fluid, and the mineral salts dissolved in the fluid is lost and the child may become dehydrated.

Dehydration can have serious medical consequences, but is relatively easy to prevent by making sure that a child who had diarrhea and vomiting drinks enough of the right kinds of liquids.



What should my child drink? GOOD choices are oral rehydration solutions, such as Pedialyte or a generic equivalent, which you can buy without a prescription at the supermarket or pharmacy. These solutions contain water, sugar, and salt that your child needs. Don't substitute plain water for oral rehydration solutions. Drinking nothing but water can be harmful, though children may drink small amounts of water in addition to the solution if they want to. AVOID fluids that contain a lot of sugar such as soft drinks, undiluted juices or fruit punch. These drinks can make diarrhea worse.

How much should my child drink? Children with diarrhea need at least twice as much fluid as they usually drink. Allow them to drink as much of the rehydration solution as they want. For the first four to six hours, a one year old child should drink at least four ounces an hour, or one ounce every 15 minutes. Older children need a little more, younger children a little less. After that, let them drink whenever they want to. Don't keep your child on the oral rehydration solution for more than a day. It is very important that your child return to a regular diet as soon as possible. When restarting a regular diet avoid fatty, fried, or spicy foods. If your infant is breastfeeding, continue to breastfeed. You may need to feed for shorter periods of time but more frequently. If they are refusing to breastfeed offer pedialyte and pump in the meantime.

What if my child is vomiting? Give the rehydration solution in very small amounts, two or three teaspoons every five minutes, until the vomiting stops. Then slowly increase to the amounts suggested above.

Does my child need medication? Most children with diarrhea and vomiting get better without special medications. In fact antibiotics and diarrhea remedies you can buy without a prescription may actually be harmful to your child. Please ask your doctor before giving your child any medications.

The most important treatment for any child with diarrhea is fluids