

Pediatric Gastroenteritis

Weight (Kg):

What is gastroenteritis?

-Acute gastroenteritis is usually caused by a virus that can make children vomit and suffer with loose stools.

-Most vomiting and diarrhea will run its course within 5 - 7 days, however occasionally they may suffer with a few bouts of loose stools for up to a few weeks beyond that.

How can I tell if my child is becoming dry (dehydrated)?

Signs of dehydration include:

1. Thirst
2. No tears when crying
3. Sunken eyes
4. Dry mouth
5. Infrequent urination
6. Cold hands and feet
7. Lethargy

When should I return to the emergency department?

1. Child is lethargic
2. No tears when crying
3. No urination in 16 hours
4. Overall more fluid (vomiting and diarrhea) is coming out than oral fluid going in
5. Tummy pain that is constantly present for the past 6 hours
6. Blood in the stool

Vomiting and Diarrhea (Viral Gastroenteritis)

Weight (Kg):

What if my child starts to vomit?

1. Don't panic. A child is miserable when they are vomiting - but it takes a long time (at least 8 hours) for a child to become dry this way. Cuddle your child and offer them sips or syringes of clear fluids (i.e. pedialyte, broth, water). You can keep offering milk to your baby.
2. If your child is starting to become dry, and he/she has no more tears, then only offer your child **Pedialyte**. Small frequent sips or syringes (5-10 ml every 5-10 minutes) are best. Once they are drinking well, and are no longer thirsty then you can go back to the usual fluids you give to your child.
3. Often diarrhea will start a few hours after the vomiting has started. Children who are having diarrhea and are still vomiting, should be seen by a physician if they are becoming very thirsty or have no tears when crying.
4. Often the vomiting will stop as the diarrhea is starting. Many physicians will suggest offering only clear fluids for a few more hours, but once a few hours have past without any vomiting, a child should be offered their regular diet. The healing of the gut occurs faster if there is food or liquid going through it.
5. Do not be alarmed if your child does not want to eat normally. As long as they are drinking and not showing signs of dehydration they will be fine.
6. Many toddlers will have a few weeks of having 3 to 4 episodes of loose stools per day following an episode of vomiting and diarrhea. If they have good energy and are otherwise feeling well, do not be alarmed they will recover.
7. Your doctor may suggest giving your child a probiotic such as *Lactobacillus*. It may reduce the frequency and length of your child's diarrhea. The dose is at least 10 billion cfu's in the first 48 hours of illness.
8. If your child is very young (under 1 year of age), your physician may provide you with some other guidelines as to when you should return to the emergency department.
9. You can also call the HealthLine if you are ever worried or have any questions about your child.

Saskatchewan Health Line: 811