

Diarrhoea and vomiting

Children may develop diarrhoea or vomiting for a number of reasons. Most commonly it is caused by a stomach bug, which will pass within a couple of days without any specific treatment. Vomiting usually lasts for 1 or 2 days but diarrhoea can last for longer.

The most important thing is to make sure your child is getting enough to drink. It will not stop the diarrhoea and vomiting, but should prevent your child from becoming dehydrated. If there is persistent vomiting, giving small sips of fluid frequently can help your child to keep the fluid down.

What treatment can I give?

- Make sure your child is getting plenty of water to drink.
- You can also help keep your child hydrated using a product like Dioralyte, which you can get at your local pharmacy.
- If there is fever, a headache or stomach pains, they can be eased with paracetamol or Calpol.
- Do not give other medicines, especially if the ingredients cannot be easily identified

How do I know if my child is dehydrated?

Look out for the following signs of dehydration:

- A sleepy or floppy child
- Sunken eyes or shadows under the eyes
- Changed breathing, either faster or slower and deeper
- Dry mouth, tongue and lips
- No tears
- When the skin is pinched gently, it stays up for a second or two
- Going ten hours without passing urine or fewer wet nappies
- If the soft spot at the top of your baby's head is more sunken than usual.

If your child is showing any of these signs, then arrange for your child to see a doctor urgently.

Feeding

Drinks are the most important thing, so food can wait until the child's appetite returns.

Babies should be fed as normal – carry on breast or bottle feeding. Extra water or Dioralyte can be offered between feeds.

Unnecessary treatment

Some treatments will not help your child and can cause more harm. This includes antibiotics and medicines to stop diarrhoea or vomiting. We will only recommend tests or treatment where they can benefit to your child.

If diarrhoea carries on for longer than seven days or has blood in it at any time then a sample will need to be sent to look for unusual bugs.

Medical advice can be sought from your GP, NHS 111 phone line or contact the hospital team who originally saw your child.

If your child is very unwell and you think it is an emergency then you can get help by calling 999. Most of the time this is not necessary and your GP or the 111 phone line can help you.