

Vomiting and Diarrhea

A viral gastroenteritis, or “stomach flu” causes symptoms including nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, diarrhea, and fatigue.

Persistent vomiting associated with a stomach virus usually resolves within 24 hours. If it does not, your child should be seen in the office. Excessive vomiting can lead to dehydration. Monitoring urine output is important. Children should urinate at least three times per day. If they are not voiding at that frequency, they should also be seen in our office. Diarrhea will often present with or after the vomiting. Diarrhea can last many days.

How to feed your child with a stomach virus

Hydration is essential. Children can go a few days without eating solid foods, but can become dehydrated if they are not drinking fluids.

- Offer your child SMALL sips of clear liquids with calories for example rehydration solutions (ie pedialyte), coconut water, sports drinks (ie Gatorade), or diluted apple or white grape juices. Jell-O, and non-dairy popsicles also help to rehydrate. PLAIN WATER ALONE IS **NOT SUFFICIENT**. **Pedialyte and other similar rehydration solutions are the best choice if your child will drink it.**
- Initially offer *tiny amounts* of this liquid, small sips or small amounts in a medicine dropper. If children drink too quickly, they are likely to vomit more. Gradually increase the amount that you offer as your child tolerates it.
- Once the vomiting has resolved start introducing bland foods (ie crackers with jelly, applesauce, bananas, broth...). Once you see that they tolerate the bland foods, reintroduce their normal diet. Children are very good at regulating what foods they can tolerate after an illness. DO NOT force feed. Ensure they are adequately hydrated and eating will follow. If your child loses weight during the illness, which we expect, once they are well and start eating normally they will gain it back quickly.
- During an illness that includes diarrhea, children may become *temporarily* lactose intolerant. You should avoid all dairy products while your child is vomiting (except breast milk if you are nursing AND they are tolerating it) and when you reintroduce dairy, if they have diarrhea, use a lactose free formula or milk. These include (Lactaid products, Similac sensitive and soy products). Once their stools have normalized, reintroduce your usual dairy products.