

Pediatrics

DIARRHEA

Diarrhea is defined as the sudden increase in watery stools. It is usually caused by a viral infection of the intestines called gastroenteritis. Diarrhea may be present with a combination of symptoms that include vomiting, fever, and generalized abdominal cramping. Diarrhea may last from several days to a week and may be most severe in the first 24-48 hours. Treatment is focused on supportive care and adequate hydration.

Remember breastfed babies normally have frequent loose stools. Change in color or odor may be normal. It is not diarrhea unless it contains blood, abruptly increases in number, or has no substance – is all water.

Treatment:

Breast fed infants:

- provide breast milk on demand, this may be more frequently than usual.

Formula Fed infants:

- avoid cows milk based formula (i.e Enfamil Lipil, Similac Advance, Nestle Good Start) until normal stools resume.
- soy based (i.e. Prosobee, Isomil) or Lactose free formulas are OK.
- offer oral rehydration solutions (Pedialyte) or other clear fluids (sugar water/tea).

Older children:

- avoid dairy and fruit juices because they may exacerbate the loose stools.
- continue with clear liquids such as Pedialyte, gatorade, broths or chamomile tea.
- If your child feels like eating, start with the BRAT diet. This includes Bread, Rice, Applesauce, & Toast.
- it is OK if your child does not eat well as long as they are staying well hydrated.

Call our office if:

- No urine for over 8 hours
- Any blood in the stool
- Fever for more than 72 hours
- Localized abdominal pain (generalized cramping may be normal)

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