

## Vomiting and Diarrhea Management

The most common cause of vomiting and diarrhea in babies and young children is viral gastroenteritis, or a viral infection of the intestinal tract. The majority of gastroenteritis starts with a low grade fever and vomiting, and progresses to diarrhea. The goal of gastroenteritis management is the prevention of dehydration. The best way to prevent dehydration is to give your child very small, frequent amounts of fluids. The cycle of drinking large quantities of liquids, followed by large bouts of vomiting is more likely to cause dehydration than small, frequent amounts of oral fluids.

If your child is two months old or less, and is having forceful vomiting, please call our office.

For infants greater than two months of age who are vomiting, do not breast or bottle feed for an hour after the child vomits. This allows the stomach to rest. After an hour, feed the child a teaspoon (5ml) of breast milk or unflavored Pedialyte. Repeat this every 15-20 minutes for an hour. If the child has not vomited, increase the amount to 2 teaspoons (10ml) every 15-20 minutes. Continue with this regimen for several hours, until the child is taking approximately half of their normal feeding. If the vomiting restarts as you increase the amount, stop the feedings for an hour, and restart at the amount where there was no vomiting.

For toddlers and older children who are vomiting, take away all food and liquids for three to four hours. Start by giving them one tablespoon (15ml) of Pedialyte every 15-20 minutes for an hour. Make sure to offer them the Pedialyte off of a spoon, or out of a medicine cup. Increase the amount of fluids by one tablespoon (15ml) every hour until they are taking four ounces at a time. Do not give them a full cup and ask them to take a sip. They will drink too much at once. If your child does not want to drink Pedialyte, you can use Pedialyte Freezer Pops instead. Start by giving the child a one inch piece of the popsicle every 15-20 minutes.

For children with gastroenteritis, it is usually prudent to withhold all solid foods for the first 24 hours. Once your child is 24 hours into the illness, and is no longer vomiting, you can give them small amounts of bland solids. Oatmeal, cream of wheat, yogurt, crackers and bananas are all good foods to start with. Give your child a very small amount to start with, and let the food digest for 30-45 minutes afterwards. If they keep down the initial feeding, they may have more. Do not give in to their pleading for more food too quickly, or the vomiting will start over again.