

HELPFUL HINTS

Do not give

Plain tap water or bottled water.
Diluted Ribena/Orange or Sports drinks.
As they do not contain the correct combination of sugar and salts to properly rehydrate your child and may make the diarrhoea last longer.

Food

Your child may refuse food at first but this does not matter so long as they continue to drink fluids. There is no need to restrict food however, if your child feels hungry at any time give small portions of food that they like eating. Fatty foods are best avoided. You may try small amounts of toast, rice, pasta, potatoes or plain biscuits

Hand hygiene

Frequent hand washing is essential to prevent spreading the infection especially after feeding and changing nappies. You should also keep your child away from other children until the diarrhoea has stopped.

Lactose intolerance

Sometimes after gastroenteritis a minority of children may become lactose intolerant for a few weeks. This can be easily treated by substituting lactose free formula into the diet for a short while. You can discuss this with your Doctor.

If your child continues to have gastroenteritis and has an appointment in the Outpatients Dept or the Beech Day Ward please contact them in advance.

We would like to hear your feedback

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Return/email suggestion to Sharon.moran@amnch.ie



**Patient Information
Gastroenteritis
in children**



**THE ADELAIDE & MEATH
HOSPITAL, DUBLIN
INCORPORATING THE NATIONAL CHILDRENS
HOSPITAL**

Developed by Paediatric Emergency Department, Medical Photography, The Adelaide, Meath Hospital, Dublin incorporating The National Children's Hospital Tallaght.

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What is Gastroenteritis?

Gastro enteritis is an infection of the gut and it is the most common cause of diarrhoea and vomiting in children. Most children will get better in a few days without any medicines. It is however important to prevent and treat dehydration.

Symptoms of gastroenteritis

Vomiting tends to happen in the first 24-48 hours followed by **diarrhoea** which may last up to a week but can last longer. The diarrhoea is usually very watery and foul smelling. Your child will feel unwell, be off their food and may have tummy pains and a fever.

Treatment for gastroenteritis

In order to prevent serious dehydration you need to encourage your child to drink often to replace the fluids lost. Giving small amounts frequently is the main principle. Giving large amounts all at once will increase the chance of vomiting.

Rehydrating your child

In caring for your child with gastroenteritis at home we recommend giving fluids in a slightly different way. Plain tap water or mineral water is not recommended..

STEP 1

Firstly, please try electrolyte solution (Dioralyte, Rapolyte). This is available from your local pharmacy. If there is a delay in getting the electrolyte solution you can use diluted 7up or Sprite (not diet) for a few hours until you get the electrolyte solution. If your child is under 5years your child should drink 5mls every 5 minutes. For children over 5 years give 10mls every 5 minutes. Continue to rehydrate with the electrolyte solution for 4-6 hours.

If the child does not vomit then proceed to step 2

STEP 2

If the baby tolerates the electrolyte solution and does not vomit proceed to try breast or bottle milk in 5mls slowly as too much too soon will cause vomiting again. Ice-pops or Jelly can also be offered as source of hydration.

Please use rehydration table below to keep a record of your child's progress.

Temperature control

A raised temperature will make the child irritable. Give Calpol syrup **or** Paralink Suppositories. Keep a check on the temperature using a thermometer.

STEP 3

If your child has not responded to step 1 or step 2 and is showing any of the following symptoms please consult your doctor

- Continuous vomiting
- Dry mouth
- Passing less urine/dry nappies
- No tears when crying
- Cold hands and feet
- Sunken eyes or fontanelle
- Weakness or drowsiness
- Sleeping more than usual

Rehydration Table

Time	Type of Fluid	Amount of fluid	Vomit	Urine	Diarrhoea