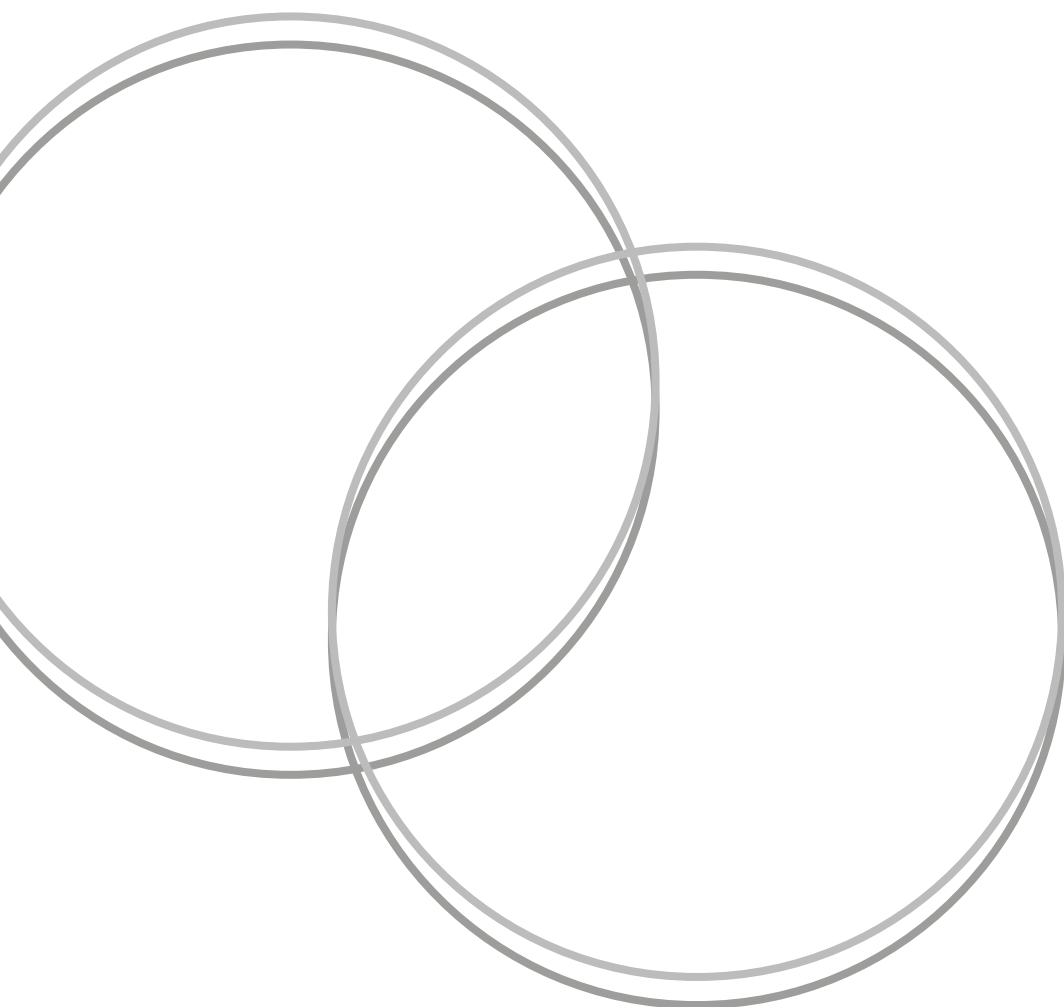


Gastroenteritis

Information for Parents or Carers



What is Gastroenteritis?

- Gastroenteritis is an upset tummy that can cause diarrhoea and / or vomiting.
- It is caused by viruses, is mild and can usually be managed at home.
- Most children with diarrhoea and vomiting get better very quickly.
- Some children, especially very young ones, can become dehydrated.
- You need to regularly check your child and follow the advice in this leaflet.

What are the symptoms?

- Your child may first have a tummy ache and fever
- The symptoms usually progress to vomiting and then to diarrhoea.
- Vomiting usually does not last more than 3-4 days.
- Diarrhoea usually lasts 5 to 7 days but may continue for up to 2 weeks.

Signs of dehydration and complications

- Your child is unable to stay awake or is difficult to wake
- Your child appears weak or floppy
- Your child has a weak, high pitched or continuous cry
- Your child's skin is unusually pale, has a blotchy marbled pattern or blue
- Your child has cold hands and feet
- Your child is breathing fast
- Your child's eyes appear sunken or your babies 'soft spot' on their head may feel sunken
- Inside your child's mouth is dry (not after a drink)
- Your child is not producing tears when crying
- Your child is weeing less/ has less wet nappies
- Your child is vomiting their drink, even when given in small frequent amounts
- Your child has blood or mucous in their stool

If your child has any of these symptoms present, seek prompt medical advice from your GP or 111

Call 999/ attend the Emergency Department in an emergency

Children at increased risk of dehydration

- Your baby is under 1 year
- Your baby was born with a low birth weight
- Your child has had more than 5 episodes of diarrhoea in 24 hours
- Your child has frequent vomiting and is vomiting their drink
- Your baby stopped breastfeeding during the illness
- Your child has diabetes or is immunocompromised

How can I help my child?

- Give your child a drink in small frequent amounts every 10 minutes (this must contain sugar e.g. apple juice 50% mixed with water 50%)
- Oral rehydration solution (ORS) e.g. Dioralyte can be given to children over 3 months following the direction on the packet.

Note:

Unwell children will often refuse fluids but can be persuaded, so it is important to persevere. Keep trying to give them drinks. Little and often is best and some will go in even if it is hard work. Try different techniques such as using a medicine syringe or in older children give and ice lolly or offer a straw. Do not let them drink a large volume in one go- they will likely vomit.

- Discourage fizzy drinks and milk, unless you have an unweaned baby, where milk is permitted
- Observe how frequently your child is weeing/ how many wet nappies you are getting (this may be difficult if your baby has diarrhoea)
- Paracetamol (Calpol) may be given if your child has a fever or tummy pain following the doses on the packaging
- Check on your child regularly for signs of dehydration and complications
- If your child is diabetic please follow your 'sick day rules' and seek advice from your diabetic nurse if concerned

When your child is improving

- Reintroduce their normal milk and usual solid food
- Avoid fizzy drinks and full strength fruit juices until after the diarrhoea has stopped

Preventing the spread of gastroenteritis

Hand washing

The most effective way is for you and/or your child to wash your hands is with liquid soap in warm running water and then dry them carefully.

- Do this after going to the toilet
- Changing nappies
- Before touching food

Your child should not:

- Share his or her towels with anyone
- Go to school or any other childcare facility until 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea and or vomiting
- Swim in swimming pools until 2 weeks after the diarrhoea has stopped

Useful contacts

- Your GP surgery
- NHS 111
- Call 999 in an emergency

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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