

## How long will the diarrhoea and / or vomiting usually last?

Diarrhoea usually lasts five to seven days but may continue for up to 2 weeks. Vomiting usually does not last for more than 3 days. Please see traffic lights advice overleaf to help you with monitoring the condition of your child.



Do not take no for an answer. Unwell children can be very disagreeable but can often be persuaded. Keep trying to give them drinks. Little and often is best and some will go in even if it is hard work.

## Caring for your child at home (diarrhoea and / or vomiting)

- The most important thing is to replace fluid as your child will be losing it from their vomiting and / or diarrhoea.
- Most children can be looked after at home with simple advice, time and patience - encourage drinking of Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) eg. Dioralyte or Electrolade- **water alone is not enough**
- In addition, continue breastfeeding or bottle-feeding and other milk feeds
- **For a child under 1** you can give small sips every few minutes (or by a teaspoon or a plastic syringe of 5mls every 5 minutes). With the plastic syringe aim the fluids into the side of the baby's mouth as they may swallow it more easily then.
- **For all children**, give drinks little and often eg. every 10 minutes.
- **For older children**, try using ice lollies or drinking through a straw every 10 minutes.

## ★ Top tips ★

Give drinks little and often.

Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) is made up from sachets of powder which have to be mixed with water and stored according to the directions on the packet. You can add additional squash (not "sugar-free") as flavouring eg. it works well with blackcurrant squash. Your child needs to drink in order to prevent dehydration (see "signs of dehydration" in the traffic light advice section overleaf). It is useful to keep a record of the number of drinks that your child has had and the number of wees, poos and vomits while they are unwell.

## Some useful telephone numbers:

If you need advice please try:  
Your local pharmacy can be found at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Health Visitor: .....

Your GP Surgery: .....

Please contact your GP when the surgery is open or call **NHS 111** when the GP surgery is closed.

**NHS 111** provides advice for urgent care needs.

**NHS 111** is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Calls from landlines and mobile phones are free.

**NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**  
for online advice and information

### Bucks:

#### Family Information Service

Tel: **0845 688 4944** or [www.bucksfamilyinfo.org.uk](http://www.bucksfamilyinfo.org.uk);

For common childhood illness advice see:  
[www.childhealthbucks.com](http://www.childhealthbucks.com)

### Berks:

#### Family Information Service - Slough

Tel: **01753 476589** or [www.servicesguide.slough.gov.uk](http://www.servicesguide.slough.gov.uk);

**Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead Tel: 01628 685632**  
or [www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/cis.htm](http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/web/cis.htm)

For common childhood illness advice see:  
[www.childhealthslough.com](http://www.childhealthslough.com)  
[www.childhealthwam.com](http://www.childhealthwam.com);

## If you are worried about your child, trust your instincts.

### Contact your GP or dial NHS 111.

Based on: Diarrhoea and vomiting in children under 5 2009 NICE clinical guideline 84

For more copies of this document please email: [chilternccg@nhs.net](mailto:chilternccg@nhs.net)

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please contact **Family Information Service** web links as above.

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**NHS** Aylesbury Vale Clinical Commissioning Group  
**NHS** Slough Clinical Commissioning Group  
**NHS** Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead Clinical Commissioning Group

This guidance is written in the following context:

This document was arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available including but not exclusively NICE, SIGN, EBM data and NHS evidence, as applicable. Healthcare professionals are expected to take it fully into account when exercising their clinical judgement. The guidance does not, however, override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient in consultation with the patient and / or carer.

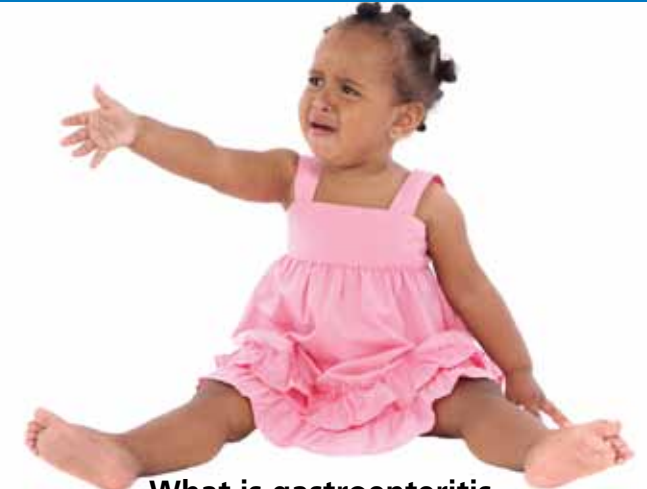
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# Gastroenteritis

## Advice Sheet

(diarrhoea and / or vomiting)

Advice for parents and carers  
of children aged under 5 years



## What is gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and / or vomiting)?

Gastroenteritis is an upset tummy that can cause diarrhoea and / or vomiting. It is usually caused by viruses, is mild and can usually be managed at home. Your child may have some, or all of the following – diarrhoea, vomiting, tummy ache and fever. One of the main risks of gastroenteritis in children and especially babies is that they may become dehydrated.

## Things you should do if your child has gastroenteritis to prevent dehydration

The most important thing is to replace fluid as your child will be losing it from their vomiting and / or diarrhoea.

### ✓ Fluids

- **FIRST CHOICE** Oral Rehydration Solution eg. Dioralyte or Electrolade
- Squash (not "sugar-free")
- Milk
- Water

### ✗ Fluids

- Fruit juices
- Fizzy drinks (as they can make diarrhoea worse)

## Medicine Cabinet

Keep the following items in your medicine cabinet ready for when you may need them:

- Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) Sachets (eg Dioralyte or Electrolade)
- Liquid Paracetamol
- Liquid Ibuprofen – Please note that if your child has been diagnosed with Asthma, Ibuprofen is not recommended, unless given by your doctor.
- These are all available over the counter (OTC) from a pharmacist. Please check the Use-By dates and keep out of the reach of children.
- OTC medicines may not be available to purchase for all age groups. Ask your pharmacist.

## Preventing the spread of gastroenteritis (diarrhoea and / or vomiting):

**Hand washing** - The most effective way is for you and / or your child to wash your hands with liquid soap ideally in warm running water and then dry them carefully:

- After going to the toilet
- After 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.

## Children who are younger than 1 year or were born at a low birth weight are more vulnerable.

If you have concerns about looking after your child at home, please contact your GP or call **NHS 111**.

## What do I do if my child has gastroenteritis? (Traffic light advice)

**Most children with diarrhoea and / or vomiting get better very quickly but some children can get worse. You need to regularly check your child and follow the advice below.**



**RED**

### If your child has signs of dehydration and:

- Becomes unresponsive
- **or** is breathing faster than usual
- **or** has unusually pale or mottled skin
- **or** has cold extremities (colder hands and feet than usual)



**AMBER**

### If your child

- Appears to be getting worse or if you are worried
- **or** is getting more thirsty despite drinking
- **or** is not drinking
- **or** has **signs of dehydration such as a dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, the soft spot at the top of the head is more dipped in than usual, more sleepy than usual, they wee less or seem generally unwell**
- **or** has blood in the stool (poo)
- **or** has had 6 or more bouts of diarrhoea in 24 hours
- **or** has 3 or more vomits in 24 hours
- **or** has a high temperature
- **or** is in constant pain



**GREEN**

**Most children with diarrhoea and /or vomiting can be safely looked after at home**

**If none of the features in the red or amber boxes above are present.**

## You need EMERGENCY help

Call **999** or go straight to the nearest Hospital Emergency (A&E) Department

Nearest Hospitals (open 24 hours 7 days a week):

- Frimley Park, Surrey
- Hillingdon Hospital
- John Radcliffe, Oxford
- Milton Keynes Hospital
- Royal Berkshire, Reading
- Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury
- Wexham Park Hospital, Slough

**Bring your child's Red Book with you.**

## You need to contact a nurse or doctor today

Please ring your GP surgery during the day or when your GP surgery is closed, please call **NHS 111**

**Bring your child's Red Book with you.**

## Self care

Using the advice on this leaflet you can care for your child at home. The main advice is to keep your child well hydrated.

If you feel you need advice please contact your **Health Visitor** or **GP Surgery** or your **local pharmacy** (follow the links at **www.nhs.uk**)

You can also call **NHS 111**