

# Diarrhoea and vomiting



Feeling sick, vomiting and diarrhoea are usually the first signs that your child has a 'tummy bug'.

- Tummy bugs are extremely common in young children and are almost always caused by a virus. They are easily spread, resulting in outbreaks in nurseries and schools.
- Avoid spreading the virus by washing your hands with soap and water after changing nappies. Keep toilets clean and don't share towels.
- Children must remain off nursery/school until 48 hours after the last episode of vomiting/diarrhoea.
- Babies under 1 year of age are at more risk of becoming dehydrated when they have a tummy bug than older children, which is why it is important to make ensure that they are drinking enough.

## What should you do?

- Avoiding dehydration is important – give your baby/child extra fluids. Give your baby oral rehydration fluids in between feeds or after each watery stool. (These can be purchased over the counter at large supermarkets and pharmacies and can help prevent dehydration from occurring) Little and often tends to work best – in hospital, babies are given 1 or 2 tablespoons (5-10 mls) of fluid to drink every 5-10 minutes. You can try using a syringe to give fluids to your child.
- Do not stop giving your baby milk. If you are breastfeeding, continue doing so. If your child is on formula, do not dilute it.
- Keep your child away from others, especially other children, until they are better.

## How long will your child's symptoms last?

- Vomiting tends to last for 1-2 days, and diarrhoea tends to last for about 5 days.

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## When should you worry?

### RED

If your child has any of the following:

- Becomes difficult to rouse / unresponsive
- Becomes pale and floppy
- Is finding it difficult to breathe

**You need urgent help go to the nearest Hospital Emergency (A&E) Department or phone 999**

### AMBER

If your child has any of the following:

- Seems dehydrated: ie. dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears, sunken fontanelle (soft spot on baby's head) or passing less urine than normal
- Has blood in the stool (poo)
- Has constant tummy pain
- Has stopped drinking or breastfeeding
- Is unable to keep down any fluids during this illness
- Becomes lethargic or drowsy
- Has a temperature above 38°C / 100.4°F.  
If your child has diabetes, monitor their blood sugars closely
- Has cold feet and hands

**You need to contact a doctor or nurse today**  
Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 - dial 111

### GREEN

If none of the above features is present, most children with diarrhoea and / or vomiting can be safely managed at home.

*(Please note that children younger than 1 year may become dehydrated more quickly. If your child appears otherwise well but you still have concerns, please contact your GP surgery or call NHS 111).*

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 given to you by your healthcare professional and / or as listed on this sheet.

**Self Care - You can provide the care your child needs at home**



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