Diarrhoea and vomiting pathway





Clinical support tool for community pharmacists

This pathway is largely written for an eventual diagnosis of infectious gastroentritis - however please be alert to the following symptoms that may raise the possibilty of a more concerning diagnosis: • Fever: Temperature of > 38°C • Shortness of breath • Altered state of consciousness • Signs of meningism • Blood in stool • Bilious (green) vomit • Vomiting alone • Recent head Injury • Recent burn • Severe localised abdominal pain • Abdominal distension.

Clinical findings	Green – Iow risk	Amber – intermediate risk	Red – high risk
Age		Under 3 months	
Behaviour	Content/smilesStays awake/awakens quicklyStrong normal crying/not crying	No smile Decreased activity/lethargic Irritable	 No response Unable to rouse or if roused does not stay awake Clinical concerns about nature of cry (weak, high pitched or continuous)
Skin	Normal skin colour Warm extremities		Pale/mottled/blue Cold extremities
Hydration	Moist tongue and conjunctivae Fontanelle normal	Dry tongue and conjunctivae Sunken fontanelle	
Urine output	Normal	Reduced / not passed urine in past 12 hours	No urine for 24 hours
Respiratory	Normal pattern and rate		Abnormal/fast breathing
Eyes	Not sunken	Sunken eyes	
Other		 Additional parent/carer concerns Age 3-6 months with temp ≥39° (102.2°F) with no clear focus of infection 	 Bloody diarrhoea Blood in vomit Dark green (bilious) vomiting Age 0-3 months with temp ≥38° (100.4°F)



Green Action

Provide diarrhoea and vomiting safety netting advice

Confirm they are comfortable with the decisions/ advice given

Always consider safeguarding issues Lower threshold for referral to primary care if have long term condition ie diabetes Lower threshold for referral in those with increased risk of dehydration*

Amber Action

Refer to primary care for review

Red Action

Refer immediately to emergency care – consider whether 999 transfer or parent/taxi most appropriate based on clinical acuity etc.

*Children with increased risk of dehydration

>3 vomits wihin 24 hours

>6 episodes of diarrhoea within 24 hours

Not tolerating fluids

History of faltering growth

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