

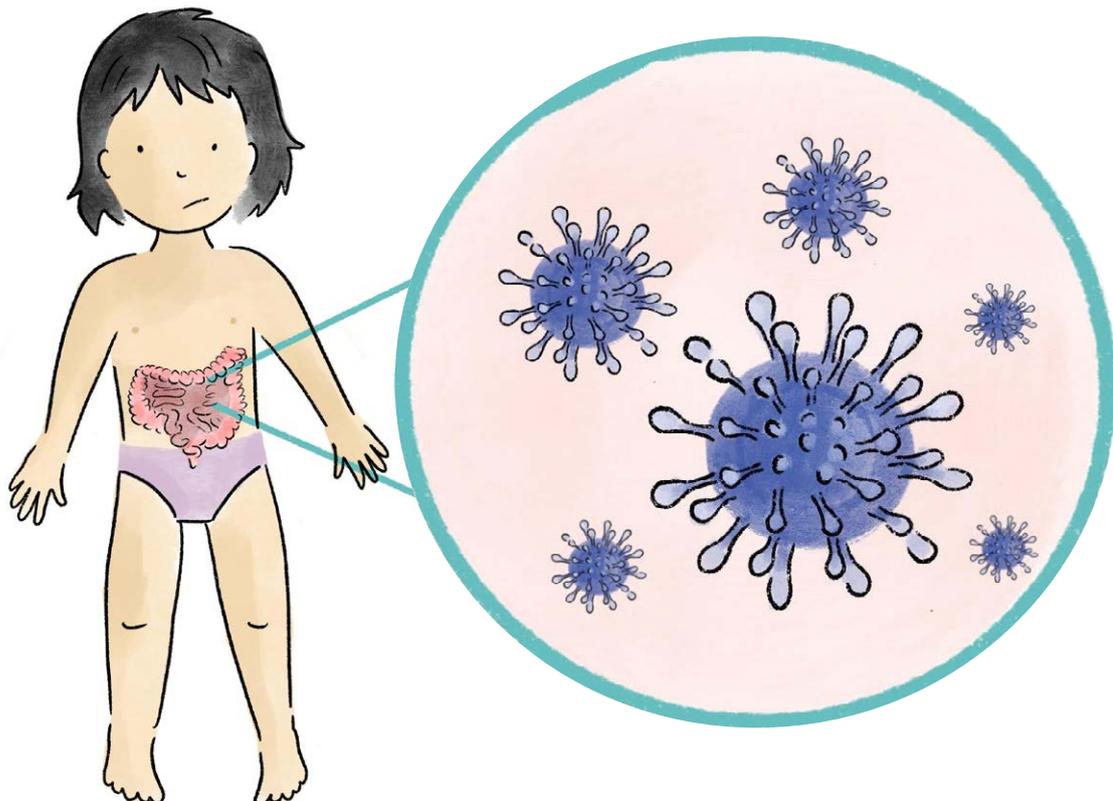
Gastroenteritis

Information for parents and carers

Key facts

Gastroenteritis is a common condition where the stomach and bowel become inflamed that can cause diarrhoea and/or vomiting.

- It is usually caused by viruses.
- Symptoms are usually mild and can be managed at home.
- One of the main risks of gastroenteritis in children and especially babies is dehydration.
- If the dehydration becomes severe it can be dangerous.



Preventing the Spread of Gastroenteritis



Wash your hands

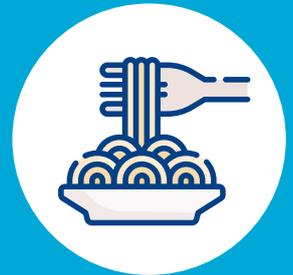
The most effective way is for you and your child to wash your hands with liquid soap, ideally warm running water and then dry them carefully. Always do this



After going to the toilet



After changing nappies



Before touching food

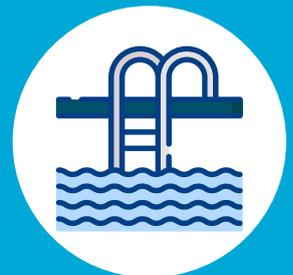
Avoid



Sharing towels



Wait 48h until last episode of diarrhoea / vomiting before returning to school

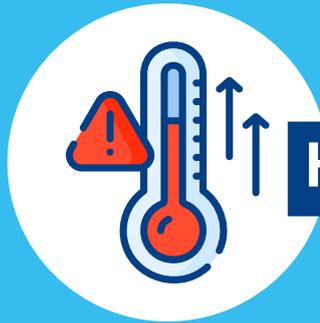


Wait 2 weeks after diarrhoea to go to a swimming pool

Symptoms of Gastroenteritis



Nausea



High fever



Stomachache



Diarrhoea

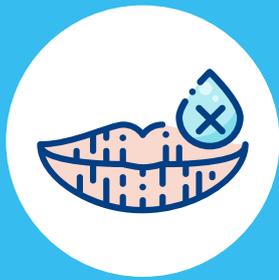


Vomiting



Warning signs that your child is dehydrated

It is important that your child does not get dehydrated
Signs of dehydration include



Dry mouth



Sunken eyes



Dark urine



Sunken fontanelle



Less urine



Sleepiness



Less tears when crying



Irritable

Caring for your child at home

If your child is not dehydrated (see warning signs) and does not have any red or amber symptoms in the traffic light advice then you can care for your child at home.

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



Give fluids little and often, if they take too much at a time, it may cause them to vomit



Unwell children will often refuse fluids but can be persuaded, so it is important to persevere. Keep trying to give them drinks.



It is fine if they do not want to eat, drinks are the most important and food can wait until they are better.



Try and continue breastfeeding or bottle-feeding as much as possible



Fruit juice and fizzy drinks should be discouraged, as they can make diarrhoea worse.



For a child under 1 year old you can give small sips every few minutes (or use a teaspoon or plastic syringe of 5 mls every 5 minutes). If using a plastic syringe, slowly aim the fluid into the side of the baby's mouth so they can swallow it more easily.



For older children, you could try using ice lollies or encourage drinking through a straw

Treatments

Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) such as Dioralyte is made up from sachets of powder which have to be mixed with water.

Oral Rehydration Solution should not be used in infants under 3 months without speaking to your GP. In children under a year it should be added to freshly boiled and cooled water according to the directions. In older children it can be added to full sugar squash to taste nicer (blackcurrant works well).

Do not give your child anti-diarrhoeal drugs as they can be dangerous.

What to keep in your medicine cabinet

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

- Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) Sachets (e.g. Dioralyte)
- Liquid Paracetamol (e.g. Calpol)
- Liquid Ibuprofen – please note that if your child has been diagnosed with Asthma, Ibuprofen is not recommended unless discussed with your doctor first.

Never exceed the maximum dose for paracetamol and ibuprofen in any 24-hour period. Keep a diary of when you give each dose so that you do not give your child too much.

Please check the use-by dates and keep out of reach of children. These medicines are all available over the counter from a pharmacist. The pharmacy or supermarket own brands are cheaper and work just as well, if you are unsure, ask your pharmacist.



Suitable fluids to give to your children



First choice - Oral Rehydration Solution such as Dioralyte.

Give:

- Squash (not "sugar-free")
- Milk
- Water



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

How long does gastroenteritis last?

Diarrhoea usually lasts about five to seven days, but may continue for up to two weeks.

Vomiting does not usually last for more than three to four days.

If your child's symptoms are taking longer than this to improve you should contact your GP or Health Visitor.



RED

If your child has signs of dehydration

- and becomes unresponsive
- or is breathing faster than usual
- or has usually pale or mottled skin
- or has colder hands and feet than usual

YOU NEED EMERGENCY HELP CALL 999

You need to be seen at the
hospital Emergency Department



AMBER

If your child has any one of these features

- appears to be getting worse or if you are worried
- is getting thirstier despite drinking
- is not drinking
- has signs of dehydration
- has blood in their poo
- has had 6 or more episodes of diarrhoea in 24 hours
- has 3 or more vomits in 24 hours
- passed urine less than twice in 24h
- has a high temperature
- is in constant pain
- is under 3 months old
- becomes more irritable or sleepy
- breathing becomes rapid or deep

SEEK MEDICAL ADVICE TODAY

Please call your GP surgery,
or, if it is closed call NHS 111

Your GP may want to speak to
you on the phone first to give you
medical advice. They will arrange
to see your child if it is appropriate.



GREEN

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

Children under one year or those
born with a low birth weight are at a
higher risk of becoming dehydrated.

SELF-CARE

Using the advice on this leaflet you
can care for your child at home.

The most important advice is to
keep your child well hydrated.

If you feel you need more advice,
please contact your local pharmacy,
Health Visitor or GP surgery

You can also call NHS 111 for advice