

## Self-care Information

# Diarrhoea & Vomiting

Tips on how you can self-manage diarrhoea and vomiting.

## “Supporting you to look after you”

### Key Points:

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Wash hands thoroughly after going to the toilet.
- Clean toilet, seat and handle after each bout of diarrhoea and vomiting.
- Do not share towels, flannels, cutlery or utensils with others.
- Stay off school or work until you've not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days.

Speak to your local pharmacy for advice on over the counter medicines.

## What causes diarrhoea and vomiting?

Diarrhoea and vomiting are common in adults and children. They're often caused by a stomach bug and should clear in a few days:

- Diarrhoea usually stops within 5 to 7 days.
- Vomiting usually stops in 1 or 2 days.

## What can be done to help diarrhoea and vomiting.

Most cases of diarrhoea clear up after a few days without treatment. The most important things are to have lots of fluids to avoid dehydration and try to prevent spreading the infection.

## When to seek advice from a pharmacist

Speak to a pharmacist if:

- You or your child (over 5 years) have signs of dehydration, such as dark, smelly pee or peeing less than usual.
- You're an older person, have a weakened immune system, or have other health conditions that increase your risk of dehydration.

They may recommend:

- Oral rehydration powder that you mix with water to make a drink.
- Medicine to stop diarrhoea for a few hours, like loperamide (not suitable for children under 12).

## You should try...

- ✓ Staying at home and getting plenty of rest.
- ✓ Drinking plenty of fluids, such as water or squash – take small sips if you feel sick.
- ✓ To eat when you feel able to – it may help to avoid foods that are fatty or spicy.
- ✓ To carry on breast or bottle feeding your baby – if they're being sick try giving small feeds more often than usual.
- ✓ Give babies on formula or solid foods small sips of water between feeds.
- ✓ Taking paracetamol if you are in discomfort – check the leaflet before giving it to your child.
- ✓ Washing your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after going to the toilet and before eating or preparing food.
- ✓ Cleaning the toilet, including the handle and the seat, with disinfectant after each bout of diarrhoea and vomiting.
- ✓ Washing soiled clothing and bed linen separately from other clothes and at the highest temperature possible – for example, 60°C or higher for linen – after first removing any poo or vomit into the toilet.



## Try not to...

- ✗ Share towels, flannels, cutlery or utensils with others.
- ✗ Return to school or work until you've not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days.
- ✗ Have fruit juice or fizzy drinks – they can make diarrhoea worse.
- ✗ Visit a swimming pool until you've not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days.



## When to seek advice from 111

- You're worried about a baby under 12 months.
- Your child stops breast or bottle feeding while they're ill.
- A child under 5 years has signs of dehydration, such as fewer wet nappies.
- You or your child (over 5 years) still have signs of dehydration (dark, smelly pee or peeing less than usual) after using oral rehydration sachets.
- You or your child keep being sick and cannot keep fluid down.
- You or your child have bloody diarrhoea or bleeding from the bottom.
- You or your child have diarrhoea for more than 7 days or vomiting for more than 2 days.

## When to call 999 or go to A&E

- Vomit blood or have vomit that looks like ground coffee.
- Have green vomit (adults).
- Have yellow-green or green vomit (children).
- May have swallowed something poisonous.
- Have a stiff neck and pain when looking at bright lights.
- Have a sudden, severe headache.
- Have a sudden, severe tummy ache.
- Have blue, grey, pale or blotchy skin, lips or tongue – on brown or black skin this may be easier to see on the palms of hands or soles of feet.
- Are having severe difficulty breathing or taking lots of quick short breaths.
- Are confused or not responding as usual.

## Here are some links to further information:

Look at the NHS Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/diarrhoea-and-vomiting/>

For a Patient Website: <https://patient.info/digestive-health/diarrhoea>

For more advice visit your local pharmacy.

