

Treatment

- Continue breast-feeding, but at more frequent intervals. Breast-feeding should never be discontinued because of diarrhea.
- If urine production is decreased, offer ORS between breast-feedings for 6 to 24 hours.

Older Children (over 1 Year Old) and Frequent, Watery Diarrhea

- The choice of solids is the key factor—starchy foods are absorbed best. Give cereals (especially rice cereal), oatmeal, bread, noodles, mashed potatoes, carrots, applesauce, strained bananas, etc. Pretzels or salty crackers can help meet your child's sodium needs.
- For fluids, use water (if solids are being consumed) or half-strength Kool-Aid. If solids are not being consumed, offer ORS. Encourage a high fluid intake.
- Avoid all fruit juice or other drinks containing fructose because they usually make diarrhea worse.
- Avoid milk for 2 or 3 days. (Reason: lactose is not as easily absorbed as complex carbohydrates.) Active culture yogurt is fine.
- ORS is rarely needed, unless diarrhea is very watery and urine production is decreased.

HOME CARE: OTHER ASPECTS

Common Mistakes. Using boiled skim milk or any concentrated solution can cause serious complications for babies with diarrhea because they contain too much salt. Kool-Aid and soda pop should not be used as the only foods because they contain little or no salt. Use only the fluids mentioned. Clear fluids alone should only be used for 6 to 24 hours because the body needs more calories than they can provide. Likewise, a diluted formula should not be used for more than 24 hours. The most dangerous myth is that the intestine should be "put to rest"; restricting fluids can cause dehydration. Keep in mind that there is no effective, safe drug for diarrhea and that extra water and diet therapy work best.

Prevention. Diarrhea is very contagious. Hand

washing after diaper changing or using the toilet is crucial for keeping everyone in the family from getting diarrhea.

Diaper Rash from Diarrhea. The skin near your baby's anus can become "burned" from the diarrhea stools. Wash it off after each bowel movement and then protect it with a thick layer of petroleum jelly or other ointment. This protection is especially needed during the night and during naps. Changing the diaper quickly after bowel movements also helps.

Overflow Diarrhea in a Child Not Toilet Trained. For children in diapers, diarrhea can be a mess. Place a cotton washcloth inside the diaper to trap some of the more watery stool. Use disposable superabsorbent diapers temporarily to cut down on cleanup time. Use the ones with snug leg bands or cover the others with a pair of plastic pants. Wash your child under running water in the bathtub. Someday she will be toilet trained.



CALL OUR OFFICE

IMMEDIATELY if

- Any blood appears in the diarrhea.
- Signs of dehydration occur (no urine in more than 8 hours, very dry mouth, no tears).
- Your child has severe diarrhea (more than eight bowel movements in the last 8 hours).
- The diarrhea is watery *and* your child also vomits the clear fluids three or more times.
- Your child starts acting very sick.

Note: If your child has vomited more than once, treatment of the vomiting has priority over the treatment of diarrhea until your child has gone 8 hours without vomiting.

During regular hours if

- A fever lasts more than 3 days.
- Mild diarrhea lasts more than 2 weeks.
- You have other concerns or questions.