

Gastroenteritis advice leaflet for parents and carers

Gastroenteritis is an infection (usually caused by a virus) which causes inflammation of the stomach and gut, resulting in diarrhoea and vomiting. Excessive diarrhoea and vomiting may lead to dehydration.

Encouraging children to drink fluids is the best way to prevent them from becoming dehydrated. Most children can be managed at home and do not need admission to hospital.

Very occasionally children will require admission to hospital for additional fluid to be given (either by a small drip into their vein or by a tube passed from their nose into their stomach - a nasogastric tube), but this is used only as a last resort and is usually not required.

Mild 	<p>If your child is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alert and playful Having wet nappies and passing urine regularly 	<p>Encourage your child to continue to drink and keep a record of how much they take on the attached sheet</p>
Moderate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Irritable or sleepy Looking more unwell Having less wet nappies or not passing urine regularly 	<p>Speak to your GP the same day for advice. If your surgery is not open then ring 111 for advice.</p> <p>Meanwhile encourage your child to continue to drink and keep a record of how much they take on the next page</p>
Severe/ Emergency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drowsy, not responding to you Has pale or mottled skin Very cold hands and feet 	<p>Attend A&E immediately, contact 999</p> <p>Meanwhile encourage your child to continue to drink and keep a record of how much they take</p>

Additional advice

- If your baby is breastfed, continue to breastfeed
- If your baby is formula fed, continue to use formula feeds
- Do NOT give half strength milk feeds
- Older children can continue to drink fluids. Use clear fluids such as water and dilute squash or oral rehydration therapy e.g. Dioralyte®. Avoid pure fruit juices and fizzy drinks as they can worsen diarrhoea.
- Try not to give your child full bottles or cups. Aim to give smaller drinks more frequently
- Use your child's oral fluid challenge chart for guidance
- If your child develops bloody diarrhoea please contact your GP
- It is more important during a gastroenteritis illness that your child takes regular fluids than solid food. However, if your child normally eats solid food, continue to offer small amounts of bland food. Avoid spicy or greasy foods.

How do I stop the infection from spreading to other people?

- Make sure everyone washes their hands with soap and dries them carefully
- Hands should be washed after going to the toilet or changing nappies, and before preparing or serving food
- Children who have gastroenteritis should not share towels with others
- Children with gastroenteritis should not go to school or nursery, until at least 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting
- Children should not swim in swimming pools until 2 weeks after the last episode of diarrhoea

This fluid challenge sheet belongs to _____

Please give your child _____ mls (2ml/kg) of fluid every 10 minutes and write down the amount on this chart

Time	Which fluid?	Amount taken	Vomiting?	Diarrhoea?	Passed urine?

If after 2 hours this fluid has stayed down then increase the amount to _____ mls (4ml/kg) every 10 minutes, for a further 2 hours. Please keep a record of the amount taken

Time	Which fluid?	Amount taken	Vomiting?	Diarrhoea?	Passed urine?