

## Medical & nursing care for your child

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Medical & nursing care for children with diarrhoea focuses on making sure your child drinks enough

- Your child will be checked for dehydration
- Drinks will be offered to your child. Drinks are the best treatment for dehydration
- Most children will get better if they drink enough
- If your child refuses to drink and continues to vomit, then a nasogastric tube may be inserted through their nose to their stomach. The tube helps get fluid into their stomach.
- If your child continues to vomit with the nasogastric tube, an IV drip may be used
- Your child will be regularly reviewed and sent home when their dehydration has improved, even if they still have diarrhoea or vomiting
- Only a very small number of children who go to hospital are admitted to the ward

### Did you know ?

If you don't already have a GP you can find a child friendly GP on the web: [www.healthforkids.net.au](http://www.healthforkids.net.au)

## Important points to remember:

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- Diarrhoea and vomiting can mostly be managed at home
- Give lots of drinks to make sure your child doesn't become dehydrated.
- Wash your hands after touching your child (especially toileting or changing nappies) and before touching any food. This stops the infection spreading.
- Do not allow other members of the family to share cups, plates, cutlery etc.
- Try to keep your child away from other children until the diarrhoea has stopped.
- Don't send your child to care, kindergarten, or school until the diarrhoea has stopped.

These websites have more information on diarrhoea and other illnesses:

<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>

[www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/](http://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/)

*Southern Health*

### Disclaimer:

This health information is for general education purposes only. It should not be used in place of medical advice. Please consult with your doctor and/or other health care professionals to ensure individualised and appropriate health care is tailored for your child.

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# Information for Parents of Children with Diarrhoea with or without Vomiting



**HEALTH for KIDS**  
in the South East

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## Diarrhoea and vomiting

Diarrhoea and vomiting are very common in children and are usually caused by an infection.

- Diarrhoea is a runny, watery bowel action, and usually lasts 2-3 days but can last up to 10 days
- Vomiting usually settles quickly, lasting a day or two.

Your child may also have:

- Tummy pain
- A high temperature
- Nausea

## Dehydration

The main worry for children with diarrhoea and vomiting is that they might become dehydrated.

Dehydration happens when children lose more water, sugar and salts through diarrhoea and vomiting than they take in from food and drinks.

### Did you know ?

Babies under 6 months of age have a higher risk of dehydration

### Signs that your child might be dehydrated:

- More sleepy than usual
- Dry lips, tongue, or mouth
- Cold hands and feet
- Sunken eyes
- Not passing urine (Dry nappies)
- Pale

## What should I do at home?

Diarrhoea and vomiting can mostly be managed at home - the most important thing is to **give lots of drinks to make sure your child doesn't become dehydrated.**

- Continue breastfeeding.  
Give smaller feeds more frequently
- If bottle feeding continue normal strength formula.
- Give regular drinks: see table for amounts → (a small amount every 10 – 15 minutes)
- Continue to give drinks even if diarrhoea or vomiting continues or gets worse
- Do not give any drugs to stop the diarrhoea and vomiting, as these can be harmful.
- Offer normal foods, but don't worry if your child doesn't feel like eating.

### Did you know ?

Any normal foods are fine – you won't "feed the bug"

These drinks are good:

- Cordial (not low calorie)  
½ cup cordial to 5 cups water
- Fruit juice (not sweetened)  
1 cup juice to 4 cups water
- Solutions that have been designed to treat dehydration. These are called 'oral rehydration solutions', some brands are:
  - Repalyte, O.R.S, Gastrolyte, Hydralyte, and Pedialyte.
  - Hydralyte icy-poles are also good; they are available from the chemist or supermarket.

### Did you know ?

You don't have to use half-strength formula for bottle-fed children. Full strength is fine.

## How much drink should I give my child?

Child's weight:	Over 15 minutes?	Over 1 hour?
< 10 kg	2 tablespoons	½ - 1 cup
10-20 kg	¼ - ½ cup	1 - 2 cups
20-30 kg	½ - ¾ cup	2 - 2 ½ cups
30-40 kg	¾ - 1 cup	2 ½ - 3 cups
40-50 kg	About 1 cup	3-4 cups

If your child wants to drink more than this, that's OK. Give small quantities each time. Large drinks might make your child vomit more.

## When should I take my child to a doctor?

Take your child to a GP:

- If you are concerned
- If your child:
  - Refuses to drink and continues to have diarrhoea or vomiting
  - Continues to drink, but vomits often and seems unable to keep any fluids down.
  - Has not been to the toilet or has not had a wet nappy for 12 hours
  - Is dehydrated
  - Has a bad stomach ache
  - Has mucous or blood in the diarrhoea
  - Is lethargic, restless or irritable

Take your child to the Emergency Department if your child has these symptoms and:

- An appointment with a GP is not available in the next few hours and you are concerned

If your GP is concerned that your child is severely dehydrated they may send you to the Emergency Department.