

Vomiting and Diarrhea in Children: Preventing Dehydration

Pediatrics • Gastrointestinal / Nutrition

Vomiting and diarrhea make a child lose water and salts fast. Small sips of the right drink, given often, keep your child from drying out (dehydration).

Give the right drink

- Use oral rehydration solution from the store (Pedialyte).
- Do not use juice, soda, sports drinks, or broth.
- Do not give a baby only plain water.

Give small sips often

- Give 1 teaspoon (5 mL) every 1 to 2 minutes with a spoon or syringe.
- Slowly give more as your child keeps it down.
- If your child vomits, wait 10 minutes. Then start again, slowly.
- Your child's goal: _____.

Keep feeding

- Keep breastfeeding, more often than usual.
- Mix formula the usual way. Do not add extra water.
- Return to regular food once your child drinks well.

Watch for dehydration

- Count wet diapers or bathroom trips.
- Watch for a dry mouth, no tears, sunken eyes, or a sunken soft spot on a baby's head.

Stay safe

- Do not give diarrhea medicine unless your provider says so.
- Never give bismuth (Pepto-Bismol) to children.
- Wash your hands after every diaper change.

Call your provider today if you have

- A baby with no wet diaper in 8 hours, or an older child with no urine in 12 hours
- A child with a dry mouth, no tears, or sunken eyes
- A child who vomits up all drinks, or vomits for more than 24 hours
- **A baby under 3 months who vomits. With a fever of 100.4 F (38 C) or higher, call right away.**
- Green vomit, or blood in vomit or stool: call right away

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- A child who is very sleepy, limp, or hard to wake
- A child with cold, blotchy, blue, or gray skin
- A child who breathes very fast or has a seizure

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: nclexpace.com/patient-education/dehydration-in-children/patient

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