

Vomiting and Diarrhea

Most of the time vomiting and diarrhea are caused by "gastroenteritis," an inflammation in the intestines caused by a virus or bacteria. Mild abdominal cramping may also occur.

How should I care for myself when I have vomiting and diarrhea?

The best approach is to put your stomach and intestines at rest.

It is important to follow a special diet to prevent becoming dehydrated from vomiting, diarrhea, or fever.

1. Do not eat or drink fluids for two hours after vomiting.
2. After two hours of resting your stomach, take two ounces of clear liquids each hour for 3 to 4 hours.
3. If no vomiting has occurred, then increase to 4 ounces per hour for 3 to 4 hours.
4. If vomiting subsides, continue to gradually increase clear liquids. If vomiting has reoccurred or returned, return to step #1.
5. Resting as much as possible helps to decrease diarrhea.
6. Avoid smoking.
7. If medication is ordered, take as directed.
8. If vomiting and diarrhea come back, resume your clear liquid diet.

Vomiting and diarrhea may be contagious, so it is important to wash hands well after using the bathroom.

For Diarrhea Only

For diarrhea only, push clear liquids as tolerated at a minimum of 2 to 3 quarts per day. Some examples of clear liquids are as follows:

- Water, ice chips, popsicles (not creamy)
- Weak tea, plain broth
- Kool-Aid, Gatorade
- Jell-O (plain) or clear fruit juice (non-citrus only)

When Vomiting Stops

When vomiting has stopped for 8 hours, and/or diarrhea slows down, begin a bland diet:

- Bananas
- Cooked pasta, rice
- Toast/white bread
- Soft boiled/poached egg
- Plain Ritz crackers
- Applesauce
- Soup with noodles
- Cream of wheat/oatmeal (made with water)

Avoid dairy products and meat for at least 36 hours. Also avoid large meals, coffee, alcohol, fatty, fried, greasy foods (hamburgers, hot dogs, hoagies), highly seasoned or spiced foods (pizza, tomato products), salad dressing, oil, butter, and raw vegetables until you feel better. Follow a bland diet for 1 to 2 days.

Call a nurse at 814-863-4463 if you develop any new prolonged or more severe symptoms of illness:

- Signs of dehydration such as small amounts of dark urine or no urine for 8 hours, no tears, and/or you become very dizzy when you stand up.
- If you are vomiting so much you can't keep anything down for 24 hours.
- Fever lasting 48 to 72 hours or greater than 101 degrees.
- Excessive drowsiness
- Continuing headache or neck stiffness
- Increased stomach pain
- Diarrhea not getting better in 2 to 3 days
- Bloody vomit or bowel movement (remember that red Kool-Aid or Jell-O can cause red vomit or diarrhea).
- Or when instructed by your clinician

In an emergency go to Mount Nittany Medical Center or call 911 for an ambulance.

Test Results and Advice Nurse

Send secure message to advice nurse via the UHS website or call 814- 863-4463.

Appointments

Appointments can be made online via the UHS website, by phone 814-863-0774, or in person. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call or go online to cancel. Otherwise you will be charged for the visit.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. This information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.