Bloody Diarrhea

Bloody diarrhea can be caused by many different conditions. Most of the time bloody diarrhea is the result of food poisoning or minor infections. Bloody diarrhea usually improves over 2 to 3 days of rest and fluid replacement. Other conditions that can cause bloody diarrhea include:

- Internal bleeding.
- Infection.
- Diseases of the bowel and colon.

Internal bleeding from an ulcer or bowel disease can be severe and requires hospital care or even surgery.

DIAGNOSIS

To find out what is wrong your caregiver may check your:

- Stool.
- Blood.
- Results from a test that looks inside the body (*endoscopy*).

TREATMENT

- **Get plenty of rest.**
- **Drink enough water and fluids to keep your urine clear or pale yellow**.
- Do not smoke.
- Solid foods and dairy products should be avoided until your illness improves.
- As you improve, slowly return to a regular diet with easily-digested foods first. Examples are:
  - Bananas.
  - Rice.
  - Toast.
  - Crackers.

  You should only need these for about 2 days before adding more normal foods to your diet.
- Avoid spicy or fatty foods as well as caffeine and alcohol for several days.

Medicine to control cramping and diarrhea can relieve symptoms but may prolong some cases of bloody diarrhea. Medications that kill germs (*antibiotics*) can speed recovery from diarrhea due to some germ (*bacterial*) infections. Call your caregiver if diarrhea does not get better in 3 days.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You do not improve after 3 days.
- Diarrhea improves but your stool appears black.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You become extremely weak or faint.
- You become very sweaty.
- You have increased pain or bleeding.
- You develop repeated vomiting.
- You vomit and you see blood or the vomit looks black in color.
- You have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.

Document Released: 12/18/2006 Document Re-Released: 03/14/2011
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