Gastroenteritis

You have gastroenteritis. This is a common viral illness. Symptoms can include nausea, vomiting, stomach cramps, diarrhea, and a slight fever. **Most of the time viral gastroenteritis clears up in 2-3 days with bed rest and a clear liquid diet.**

If you are not vomiting, you can start having 3 to 5 small sips of water (or other clear liquid) every 20-30 minutes. Once nausea has cleared and diarrhea slowed, gradually increase clear liquids, over the next 12 hours to 1-2 cups every hour as tolerated. You can then try sodas, Gatorade, broth, and jell-o if your cramps and nausea are gone. Try crackers and dry toast as your symptoms improve, usually by 24 hours, but progress slowly with small helpings. Stay away from milk and dairy products, alcohol, and drugs that upset your stomach for the next 2 to 3 days.

Vomiting with gastroenteritis may be as violent and prolonged as with food poisoning. If other members of your family also become ill, check with your health care provider's office or the health department. Wash your hands well to avoid spreading any germs (bacteria or virus).

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- There is a fainting episode.
- You or your child are unable to keep fluids down.
- Signs of dehydration including, dry mucous membranes of the mouth, no tears from the eyes, decreased urination or less wetting of diapers are present.
- Abdominal pain develops, increases or localizes. (Right sided pain can be *appendicitis* and left sided pain in adults can be *diverticulitis*).
- You or your child develop a high fever (an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C) for over 3 days).
- Diarrhea becomes excessive or contains blood or mucus.
- Lethargy or confusion develops.
- The amount of urine decreases.
- Vomiting or diarrhea persists more than 48 hours.
- Excessive weakness, dizziness, fainting or extreme thirst develops.

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