

# Diarrhea

**D**iarrhea is caused by a virus or bacteria in your child's intestines. Mild diarrhea is a few loose bowel movements. Severe diarrhea is when the bowel movements are watery. When your child has diarrhea, it is important that she not become dehydrated. Avoid all fruit juices and soft drinks because they make diarrhea worse. Pedialyte® (or the store brand) is a special electrolyte solution that can prevent dehydration.

**If your child has severe (watery) diarrhea, and is less than 1 year old and bottle fed, do the following:** give him fluids more often than normal, and as much as he wants, since fluids prevent dehydration; give Pedialyte® instead of formula for 4-6 hours; after 4-6 hours give your baby formula again; if your baby is over 4 months old, continue rice cereal, strained carrots, strained bananas, and mashed potatoes.

**If your child has severe (watery) diarrhea, and is less than 1 year old and breastfed, do the following:** breast feed more often; if over 4 months old, continue rice cereal, strained carrots, strained bananas and mashed potatoes; offer Pedialyte® between feedings only if your baby does not urinate as often as usual or has dark colored urine.

**If your child has severe (watery) diarrhea, and is over 1 year old:** give water or an electrolyte solution (low calorie Gatorade®, Powerade Zero®, or Pedialyte®), dried cereal, saltine crackers, yogurt, oatmeal, bread, noodles, mashed potatoes, carrots, applesauce, and strained bananas.

A probiotic supplement taken once daily can help shorten the course of stomach illnesses. Many are available over the counter, including Floragen4Kids®, Pedialax® chewable probiotics, and Culturelle® for children.

**If your child has mild diarrhea:** feed your child like always, stay away from all fruit juices and sugary drinks.

## **WHEN TO CALL:**

- If your child has not urinated in 8 hours (12 hours for older children) or has very dry mouth or no tears
- If there is any blood in the diarrhea
- If your child has had more than 8 bowel movements in the last 8 hours
- If the diarrhea is watery AND your child also throws up repeatedly
- If your child acts very sick, or weak
- If there is mucus or pus in the bowel movements
- If your child has a fever that lasts more than 3 days
- If the mild diarrhea lasts more than 2 weeks



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