**Vomiting & Diarrhea**

Vomiting and diarrhea are common problems in childhood. Most illnesses associated with vomiting and diarrhea are caused by viruses, while a few are caused by bacteria. Vomiting and diarrhea are our body’s way of getting rid of gastrointestinal infections.

Unfortunately, in children, frequent vomiting and/or frequent diarrhea can lead to dehydration.

**How do I prevent my child from getting dehydrated?**

The best way to prevent dehydration is to replace the fluid that the body loses because of vomiting/diarrhea. This is best done by giving fluids by mouth.

**What fluids can be used for hydration?**

* Pedialyte or half-strength apple juice are great hydrating fluids
* Avoid using colas, sugary fruit juices, or other sugary drinks as the sugar and electrolytes in these drinks can sometimes cause or worsen vomiting and diarrhea

**What do I do if my child is vomiting?**

* Start by giving 1 teaspoon of a hydrating fluid every 5 minutes for ½ hour
* If no vomiting has occurred, then increase to 2 teaspoons of fluid every 5 minutes for ½ hour
* If still no vomiting has occurred, increase to 1 tablespoon of fluid every 5 minutes
* Just keep increasing the fluids gradually: This allows the body to absorb fluids in lesser amounts without irritating the stomach
* Oral rehydration can continue for 4 to 12 hours

Sometimes the illness will be so severe that there is no way to avoid dehydration. If that is the case, your child will need an IV so that fluid can be given intravenously while letting the stomach and intestines rest for a while.

**What do I do if my child just has diarrhea?**

* If your child has only diarrhea, then staying hydrated is much easier as all the fluid that is lost in the diarrhea can be replaced by mouth
* Children who have diarrhea and who are not dehydrated should continue to be fed a diet that is appropriate for their age
* Children who have diarrhea and who are dehydrated should be rehydrated first and then should be given age-appropriate foods
* Foods that are easy to digest are: rice, wheat, potatoes, bread, cereals, lean meat, yogurt, fruits, vegetables, milk
* Avoid foods that are high in fat or simple sugar (including tea, sugary juices, soft drinks)

**Are medications helpful in treating vomiting/diarrhea?**

For the most part, medication is not helpful. Sometimes a medical provider will prescribe Zofran (ondansetron) to help reduce nausea.

Avoid Lomotil, Belladona, Pepto-Bismol, Kao-Pectate, and other natural remedies. Many of these do not help and can be harmful in children.

**When should my child see a doctor?**

Most of the time, seeing a medical provider is not necessary with vomiting and diarrhea. Concerning symptoms that might need to be addressed by a medical provider include:

* Vomiting that does not stop
* Not urinating at least every 8 hours
* Dry mouth
* No tears
* Irritability (not consolable)
* Blood in the stool
* Vomiting blood
* Diarrhea for more than 5 days
* Fever greater than 102.5
* Difficulty awakening your child
* Not eating
* Severe abdominal pain
* Vomiting green (bilious) fluid

Feel free to contact your medical provider or nurse if any of the above symptoms occur or if you have concerns. You can always reach a health care provider at Premier Pediatrics by calling 303-655-1685. Or you can make an appointment and visit us at one of our locations: 1606 Prairie Center Parkway, Suite 300, Brighton, CO 80601 or 10569 Chambers Road, Commerce City, CO 80022.

