

VOMITING AND DIARRHEA

VOMITING and diarrhea are usually caused by a viral infection of the intestines. It is important that your child's stomach "rest" for a couple of days. The following guidelines include several things that you can do at home to make your child more comfortable.

CLEAR liquids should be given for the first 12 to 24 hours. These include Pedialyte, Gatorade, Jello, popsicles and gingerale. Since fruit juices may cause diarrhea if used in large quantities, give juices in limited amounts only. Soft drinks—Coke, 7-up, Sprite—may be given after being open for a while and the bubbles have come out of the drink. If your child is vomiting, start slowly with one or two tablespoonfuls (1/2 to 1 ounce) every 30 minutes and increase the amount each hour. If your child vomits while doing this, wait one hour and start over using small amounts. Breast fed infants may continue to nurse.

MEDICATION such as Imodium AD may be given to school age children to decrease cramping and the frequency of the diarrhea.

AFTER 12 to 24 hours, begin to advance the diet:

- Children less than 12 months of age should be started on their regular formula diluted with Pedialyte or water (for example: 2 oz. of formula with 2 oz. Pedialyte)
- Children older than 12 months should be started on foods such as **B**ananas, **R**ice (pasta and potatoes), Applesauce and **T**oast (crackers or a flour tortilla). This is the **BRAT** diet.

PROCEED the next day to a regular diet. Milk and fried, greasy or spicy foods may make vomiting or diarrhea worse during the first few days of your child's illness.

PREVENT the spread of the illness to others by thorough hand washing with soap and water after using the toilet and before preparing food. Wash hands after changing each diaper.

CHILDREN, especially small infants, are in danger of becoming dehydrated because large amounts of body fluids are lost through vomiting and diarrhea. Signs of dehydration include:

- Mouth becomes dry and sticky
- No tears are seen when your child cries
- Eyes are sunken
- Fewer wet diapers or less frequent urination than usual

CALL MY OFFICE or the Emergency Room if your child has:

- Dehydration
- Vomit that contains blood or dark green fluid
- Severe, persistent abdominal pain
- Stools that are black, dark green or bloody
- Temperature greater than 101 degrees
- Diarrhea lasting more than one week
- Difficulty in being woken up
- If your child is not better when you follow the instructions on this sheet

Kathleen E. Ethridge, M.D.
Phone: 372-3135