

Gastroenteritis in children

Emergency Department

Information for Parents

This leaflet is designed to give you information about gastroenteritis in children and help you answer some of the common questions you may have.

What is gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis is a viral infection of the gut that causes diarrhoea and / or vomiting.

What are the symptoms?

It can cause any of the following symptoms:

- Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Tummy pain
- Raised temperature
- Dehydration (covered below).

Diarrhoea commonly lasts 5-7 days and usually stops within two weeks.

Vomiting commonly lasts 1-2 days and usually stops within three days.

How is it diagnosed?

Your doctor will usually diagnose gastroenteritis after a careful history and examination of your child.

How is it treated?

Children can be treated with 'Oral Rehydration Solution' (ORS). This can be bought in pharmacies and supermarkets and can be given at home if your child is not too unwell.

Is my child dehydrated?

Most children get better with supportive care at home. However, some children can become dehydrated with gastroenteritis.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Signs of dehydration can include:

- Dry mouth or tongue
- Reduced number of wet nappies
- Sunken eyes
- Being unusually sleepy or irritable
- Cold hands and feet.

If you are concerned your child may be dehydrated, you should discuss this with a health professional.

Some children can be at risk of being dehydrated:

- Children under 6 months
- Low weight at birth
- Refusing oral fluids
- Those with poor growth.

Can it spread around?

Gastroenteritis can easily spread from one person to another. In order to avoid this:

- Wash your hands and your child's hands regularly
- Regularly clean the toilet with disinfectant
- Do not share towels with your child
- Keep your child off school / playgroup until 48 hours after their last symptom.

Looking after my child with gastroenteritis

Some helpful tips include:

- Encourage fluid intake offering small but more frequent amounts
- If your child vomits, wait 5-10mins before trying again with fluids slowly
- Do not stop your child from eating if they want to
- Do not give anti-diarrhoea medicines
- Giving ORS or other clear fluids containing sugar, if your child is having a lot of diarrhoea
- Paracetamol for tummy pain.

When should I seek help?

You need urgent help (999 or nearest Emergency Department) if your child has any of the following:

- Becomes difficult to rouse
- Becomes pale and floppy
- Is finding it difficult to breathe
- Has cold hands and feet.

You need to contact your doctor or nurse (your GP surgery or dial 111) today if:

- Seems dehydrated, for example dry mouth, sunken eyes, passing less urine
- Has constant tummy pain
- Has stopped drinking fluids
- Becomes irritable
- Is under 2 months old.

If your child has none of the above, they can usually be safely managed at home using this guide

Further Information

For non-emergency health care advice, see your GP or ring 111

For emergencies, ring 999

To find your local health care services, including out of hours pharmacies and urgent care centres, visit www.nhs.uk

Local health care services in Wolverhampton include:

- The Phoenix Health Centre (Urgent Care Centre), Parkfield Road, Parkfields, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV4 6ED.

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。