

Children's Emergency Department (CHED)

Diarrhoea and Vomiting (D&V) Discharge Information Leaflet

Your child has been seen in the Emergency Department and the clinician has assessed that your child may be safely treated at home for their stomach bug.

This leaflet is to advise you about how to manage your child's hydration needs and to help you decide where and when to get further advice or assessment if needed.

My child is continuing to have D&V, should I be worried?

Diarrhoea usually gets better by itself over a period of 5-7 days and most children will be fully recovered within 2 weeks. Vomiting often lasts 1-2 days and most children will stop within 3 days. Diarrhoea will usually be getting better by 7 days. If your child's symptoms are lasting longer than this, then you should contact a healthcare professional.

Is my child dehydrated?

Most children will not become dehydrated despite quite a lot of vomiting or diarrhoea. D&V can lead to dehydration, which is when the body does not have enough water or the right balance of salts to carry out its normal functions. This usually happens if the child is not drinking enough. If the dehydration becomes severe it can be dangerous.

Some signs are more significant:

- Prolonged periods of reduced responsiveness
- Being unable to drink despite having medicines (paracetamol and ibuprofen)
- Eyes appearing to be sunken
- Vomit that contains blood or is very dark green (bright green and yellow is normal)
- Passing less than half the amount of urine as normal
- Pale or mottled skin or cold hands and feet

For these signs seek medical advice (see "where can I get help?")

Some signs are quite common and can be worrying, but can usually be managed with medicines and encouraging them to drink:

- Passing less urine than when they are well
- Being miserable or less active

If your child has not had any paracetamol within the last 4 hours, or ibuprofen in the past 6 hours, you can give them medicine and see if they improve if you feel it is safe to do that.

If they have had all the medicine that they are allowed to have and you are worried or unsure then you should seek medical advice (**see "where can I get help?" on the last page**).

How to prevent dehydration:

- If your child has D&V but is not dehydrated then keep feeding them little and often, ensuring that you are offering plenty of fluids.
- Give your child frequent small drinks. Try to minimise the amount they can gulp as this may make their vomiting worse.

- If your child is usually breast fed or bottle fed, you should continue to give them milk.
- For older children, diluted apple juice -50% apple juice (not sugar free), 50% water- has been proven to be an effective fluid and is better tolerated than Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS).
- If your child prefers ORS (such as Dioralyte) this is available over the counter.
- We recommend that you give your child 5-10 millilitres of fluid every 10 minutes to ensure hydration. You can use a small syringe to give this if necessary.

Is it always safe to give my child paracetamol or ibuprofen?

It is always safe to give these medicines unless you have been told not to by a health care professional. You can give these medicines even if your child is not eating or drinking and even if they are vomiting.

If you are going to get your child seen, it is helpful if they have had these medicines before they arrive. Paracetamol and ibuprofen won't interfere with a medical assessment or mask a dangerous illness.

Giving medicines to your unwell child

When giving paracetamol and ibuprofen you should always follow the instructions on the bottles. Here are some answers to some frequently asked questions about these medicines:

- It is safe to give both medicines to your child if you don't go above the recommended dose for either in a 24-hour period or give them more often than the bottle says you can.
- It is recommended that if you give both you should wait at least an hour after giving the first medicine before deciding to give the second.
- It isn't dangerous to give them together but spacing them out helps by giving a better spread over 24 hours.
- Your child doesn't need to have a fever to benefit from medicines. You should give your child paracetamol or ibuprofen even if they don't have a fever if they seem miserable, in pain or don't want to eat or drink.

Where can I get help?

NHS 111 website or phone advice service

- If you feel that you can manage your child's illness, but you want advice about something (Your local pharmacist may also be able to help)
- If you are unsure about whether your child needs to be seen or needs medical treatment

Your GP or the NHS walk in centre

- If you have been advised to go there by 111
- If you feel that your child needs a medical assessment soon but is not an emergency

Go to your nearest Emergency Department or phone 999

- If your child has the significant features above
- If your instinct is that your child is dangerously unwell, especially if they have had paracetamol and ibuprofen

- If you are advised to do so by 111 or your GP

We aim to provide the best care for every patient. So, we would like your feedback on the quality of the care you have received from the Hospital. Please visit <http://ratenhs.uk/IQu9vx>

