

Information for Parents / Carers:

Caring for your child with gastroenteritis



About Gastroenteritis

Gastroenteritis is an infection of the gut, which causes diarrhoea and / or vomiting. It can lead to dehydration when the body does not have enough water or the right balance of salts to carry out normal functions.

Children at increased risk of dehydration include:

- Young babies under 1 year (especially under 6 months)
- Those born at a low birth weight,
- Those who have stopped drinking/breastfeeding during the illness
- Children with poor growth.

Gastroenteritis is usually caused by a virus and requires no treatment other than plenty of fluids. Antibiotics do not kill viruses.

Sometimes infected food can cause gastroenteritis (food poisoning). Bacteria can cause food poisoning, for example campylobacter and salmonella.

What are the symptoms of gastroenteritis?

- Diarrhoea, often vomiting as well
- Vomiting can last up to 3 days
- Diarrhoea may continue longer, between 5-7 days after vomiting and can last up to 2 weeks.
- Crampy pains in the abdomen (tummy) are common.
- Dehydration - passing less urine than normal with dry mouth.

Gastroenteritis Advice Guide:

How is your child?



Red

If your child

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

You need urgent help

Please phone 999 or go to the nearest Accident and Emergency



Amber

If your child

- Seems dehydrated ie. dry mouth, sunken eyes, no tears, sunken fontanelle (soft spot on baby's head), drowsy or passing less urine than normal
- Has blood in the stool (poo) or constant tummy pain
- Has stopped drinking or breastfeeding and / or is unable to keep down fluid
- Becomes irritable or lethargic
- Their breathing is rapid or deep
- Is under 2months old

You need to contact a doctor or nurse today

Please ring your GP surgery or call NHS 111 - dial 111



Green

- If none of the above features are present, most children with Diarrhoea and / or vomiting can be safely managed at home.

Self care

Using the advice in this guide you can provide the care your child needs at home

How can I help my child?

- Continue to offer your child their usual feeds, including breast or other milk feeds (do not dilute milk feeds). This is in addition to extra rehydration fluid if advised.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of fluids - little and often, even if your child vomits or feels sick. Any drink is better than none. Oral rehydration solutions (ORS) are best. They provide the perfect balance of water salt and sugar. ORS can be purchased from the counters of large supermarkets and pharmacies. Do not use home made salt drinks as the quantity of salt has to be exact.
- Mixing the contents of ORS sachet into squash (not "sugar free") may improve the taste. Ice lollies are a useful extra source of fluid.
- Do not worry if your child is not interested in solid food, but offer food if hungry. Do not "starve" a child with gastroenteritis.
- If your child has other symptoms like high temperature, neck stiffness or rash please ask for advice from your healthcare professional (or call 111).
- If your child has stomach cramps and pain killers do not help, seek advice. Ibuprofen should not be given if your child has not passed urine or has blood in their stools.
- Hand washing is the best way to stop gastroenteritis spreading.

After care

Once your child is rehydrated and no longer vomiting:

- Reintroduce the child's usual food.
- If dehydration recurs, start giving ORS again.
- Anti-diarrhoea medicines (also called Antimotility drugs) should not be given to children.

Preventing the spread of Gastroenteritis

You and/or your child should wash your hands with soap (liquid if possible) in warm running water and then dry them carefully:

- After going to the toilet
- After changing nappies
- Before touching food

Your child should not:

- Share his or her towels with anyone
- Go to school or any other childcare facility until 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea and / or vomiting
- Swim in swimming pools until 2 weeks after the diarrhoea has stopped

Name of Child

Age Date/Time advice given

Further advice / Follow up

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Name of professional

Signature of professional

Some Useful Phone Numbers

GP Surgery (make a note of the number here)

NHS 111 - Dial 111

(available 24hrs - 7 days a week)

GP Out of Hours Service - appointments booked via NHS 111

(Open from 6:30pm - 8:30am, 7 days a week)

For online advice:

NHS Choices www.nhs.uk

(available 24hrs - 7 days a week)

Urgent Care Centre

Warren Farm Urgent Care Centre

Warren Farm Road, Birmingham, West Midlands, B44 0PU

8.00am-8.00pm

Erdington Health and Wellbeing Walk In Centre

196 High Street, 1st Floor, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 6SJ

8.00am-8.00pm

Washwood Heath Urgent Care Centre

Clodeshall Road, Washwood Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands, B8 3SN

9.00am-9.00pm

The Hill Urgent Care Centre

Sparkhill Primary Care Centre, 856 Stratford Road,

Sparkhill, Birmingham, B11 4BW

8.00am-8.00pm

South Birmingham GP Walk In Centre

0121 415 2095

15 Katie Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6JG.

8.00am-8.00pm

Birmingham NHS Walk In Centre

0121 255 4500

Lower Ground Floor, Boots The Chemists Ltd,
66 High Street, Birmingham, West Midlands, B4 7TA

Mon-Fri: 8.00am – 7.00pm (last patient seen at 6:30pm)

Sat: 9.00am – 6.00pm (last patient seen at 5:30pm)

Sun: 1.00am – 4.00pm (last patient seen at 3:30pm)

Solihull UCC

Solihull Hospital, Lode Lane, Solihull, B91 2JL

8.00am-8.00pm

Summerfield GP and Urgent Care Centre

Summerfield Primary Care Centre, 134 Heath Street,
Winson Green, Birmingham, B18 7AL.

8.00am-8.00pm

If you require an interpreter, inform the member of staff you are speaking with.

Data Protection

Looking after and sharing information about your child

We have a duty of care to help patients and families understand how information about them is kept and shared and we include the following information in all our patient leaflets:

Information is collected about your child relevant to their diagnosis, treatment and care. We store it in written records and electronically on computer. As a necessary part of that care and treatment we may have to share some of your information with other people and organisations who are either responsible or directly involved in your child's care. This may involve taking your child's information off site. We may also have to share some of your information for other purposes, such as research etc. Any information that is shared in this way will not identify your child unless we have your consent. If you have any questions and/or do not want us to share that information with others, please talk to the people looking after your child or contact PALS (Patient Advice and Liaison Service) on 0121 333 8403.

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Website: www.bch.nhs.uk

© CPADS 53493/16
Produced: Oct 2016
Review Date: Oct 2020
Version 1.0.0

