

Vomiting and Diarrhea, Children and Adolescents (over 1 year of age)

Vomiting and diarrhea are often caused by a virus. The vomiting may last 24 hours, but the diarrhea may persist for 5-10 days. Sometimes the diarrhea does not start until 24 hours after the vomiting begins. High fever is common in the early illness; Tylenol (Acetaminophen) may be given to control fever. Note that Ibuprofen can worsen stomach upset. The only way to treat the “stomach flu” is to change the diet.

Please note: Vomiting for 24 hours without the development of diarrhea could be a sign of a more significant illness, such as appendicitis. Vomiting after a head injury can be serious, and always requires at least a phone call to our office to discuss.

Give nothing by mouth for 1 hour after vomiting. Then start with clear liquids only: Pedialyte® or Pedialyte® popsicles, Gatorade, flat ginger ale, chicken broth, Jell-O, or popsicles. (Avoid red or purple drinks, as these could be confused for blood in the vomitus or diarrhea). Give 1-2 teaspoons every 5-10 minutes for 1-2 hours, and slowly increase. Give small amounts frequently, until the child can tolerate 3oz at a time.

If the child is doing well for several hours, you may add small amounts of the following “binding” solids (aka – the BRAT diet).

- Bananas
- Rice – cooked white rice, puffed rice cereal, rice cakes
- Applesauce – not apples or apple slices
- Toast – white bread with jelly, no butter. Saltine crackers, pretzels.
- Noodles – plain with no sauce. Not whole grain.

If the vomiting continues 24 hours, call the office. Also, if the diarrhea lasts 48 hours, please call the office.

After 24-48 hours of success with the BRAT diet, you may add bland, non-fatty foods such as chicken, lean meat, boiled or baked potato, etc. Gradually return to a regular diet. Milk and milk products can worsen diarrhea, so only give small amounts for a week, and discontinue them for the week if you notice worsening symptoms.

Notify our office if:

- Vomiting persists more than 24 hours.
- High fever persists.
- You find blood in the vomit or diarrhea.
- Your child is unable to keep down even small sips of fluid.
- Your child shows signs of dehydration: no urine for 6-10 hours, no tears, dry mouth and skin, sunken eyes, difficult to arouse.