

Vomiting and Diarrhea, Infants (less than 1 year)

Vomiting and diarrhea are often caused by a virus. The vomiting may last 24 hours, but the diarrhea may persist for 5-10 days. 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. 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. Nursing babies may resume breastfeeding, but give shorter, more frequent feedings. For example, breastfeed for 5-10 minutes every 30 minutes. If vomiting improves after 2-3 hours, then resume normal feeding schedule.

If your infant drinks formula, then start with oral rehydration solution such as Pedialyte®. Give ½ ounce every 20 minutes for 1-2 hours. If this goes well, slowly increase the volume of each feeding until the baby is able to take a normal-volume bottle. After 24 hours, the vomiting should stop, but the diarrhea may still be present; switch back to the normal formula.

If the baby is doing well, 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.

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
- Fever of 102 or higher. (Call for 100.4 or higher if child is less than 4 months of age)
- 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 wet diapers for 6 hours, no tears, dry mouth and skin, sunken eyes, difficult to arouse.
- There is a change in behavior, i.e. she is listless, or very irritable.