



## Vomiting and Dehydration

Vomiting is a very common complaint in childhood. Most vomiting is benign, but prolonged and persistent vomiting may lead to dehydration.

**Cause:** The most common cause of vomiting is viral infections. More serious causes of vomiting include ingestions, head injuries, or mechanical obstruction of the bowels.

**Symptoms:** The most serious side effect of vomiting is dehydration. Common symptoms of dehydration include dry mouth, dry sunken eyes, decreased urination, lethargy, and decreased tears. Usually, these symptoms develop over the course of 12-24 hours.

**Treatment:** Most episodes of vomiting are limited and will resolve spontaneously in the first 12-24 hours. For children with persistent vomiting who develops signs of dehydration your doctor may prescribe medications to decrease the nausea. In severe cases, your child may require IV fluids or admission to the hospital.

Home treatment involves encouraging clear liquids such as pedialyte or Gatorade. Milk should be avoided while your child is still vomiting as it usually causes a more upset stomach. Avoid water as a rehydration solution as it does not contain any salts or sugar.

**Follow up:** If your child is doing well no follow up is necessary. You should follow up immediately if your child develops any of the following:

- Fever above 104 degrees not responding to medication
- Neck stiffness, neck pain, or headache
- Signs of dehydration (dry mouth, lethargy, sunken eyes, decreased urine)
- Difficulty swallowing, talking or breathing
- Seizures
- Bilious (green) vomiting
- Swelling and pain of the abdomen.
- Worsening symptoms

Please note: These guidelines are not meant to diagnose any condition, or treat any condition not diagnosed by a physician. They are provided for general information only. If you are concerned about your child's condition, call a physician or 911 immediately.