

Accident & Emergency  
Department



Patient Information

Gastroenteritis  
In children

(Vomiting & Diarrhea)

Gastroenteritis

It is an infection of the bowel that causes diarrhea and vomiting. It is very common in young children and is mainly caused by viruses and less by bacteria. It can be picked up from another person or from contaminated food.

Symptoms may include frequent watery stools, vomiting, abdominal pain, crying due to pain or hunger, fever anal soreness and sometimes bloody stools.

The frequent loose stools and vomiting can cause dehydration and loss of minerals such as sodium chloride and potassium. The younger the child, the greater the danger. The danger signs are listlessness, difficulty in waking up, sunken eyes, very dry skin and tongue, and very

little urine output. If these signs are present take the child to the doctor without delay.

There is no special treatment for this problem. Give small amounts of fluid often (pedialyte fluids or rehydration powder mix drink); start bottle feeds after 24 hours; continue breastfeeding; start solid food after 24 hours; maintain good hygiene. Try to avoid giving straight lemonade or sugar water.

Consult your doctor if diarrhea is 6 or more watery stools in day; persistent vomiting; presence of any of the danger signs or severe abdominal pain.

Your child's health is important