



Information for Patients and Carers

Diarrhoea and vomiting

Gastroenteritis / tummy bugs

What is gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis (often called a "tummy bug") is very common in children. It is usually caused by a virus. It spreads easily in nurseries, schools and in families.

Your child may have:

- diarrhoea (runny poo)
- vomiting (being sick)
- tummy pain
- a fever (a temperature above 38°C).

Vomiting usually lasts 1-2 days and diarrhoea usually lasts about 5 days but can last up to 2 weeks.

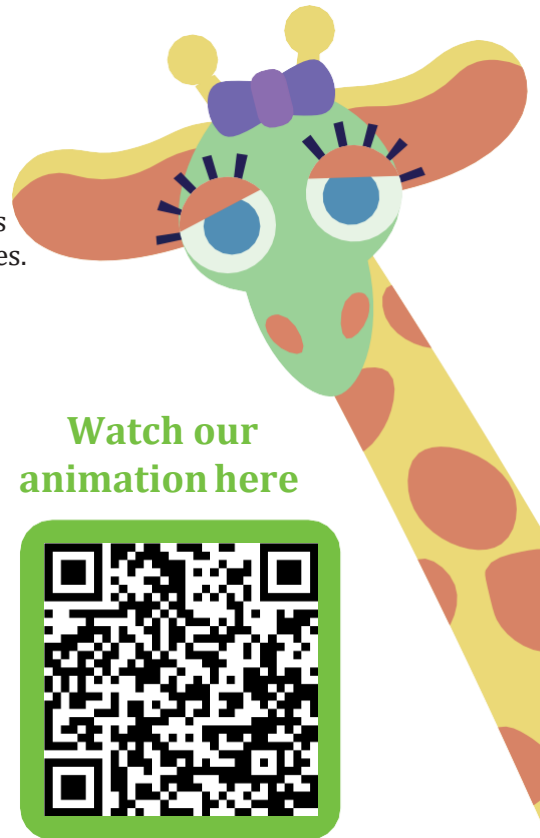
How can you help at home?

1. Give plenty of drinks

Your child can lose a lot of fluid when they are sick or have diarrhoea. This can make them dehydrated (not enough water in the body). Babies under 1 year old can become dehydrated much faster than older children.

- Give small amounts of drinks often
- Sugary drinks are best (not fizzy)
- For children over 6 months, watered-down apple juice can help
- For babies under 6 months, offer their usual breastmilk or formula more often
- You can use rehydration drinks (like Dioralyte) which are available from supermarkets and pharmacies
- Some children prefer ice lollies

Your child can eat if they want to, but do not worry if they don't feel like eating and don't force them to eat. If they do feel like eating, simple foods like toast, rice, or soup are good options.



Watch our
animation here



2. Help with pain or fever

You can give paracetamol or ibuprofen if your child has pain or a fever.

Always follow the instructions on the packet.

Do NOT give them aspirin or anti-diarrhoea medicine.

3. Stop it spreading

Keep your child off school or nursery while they are ill. **They can go back 48 hours after the diarrhoea and vomiting have stopped.**

To stop the tummy bug spreading at home, wash hands often with soap and water, especially after using the toilet, changing nappies, and before food. Don't share towels, flannels, or cutlery. Wash any soiled clothing or bedding on a hot wash

When should you worry?



RED

**You need
urgent
help.**

- Green vomit or blood in vomit
- Very sleepy, confused or hard to wake up
- Looks mottled, pale, is cold to touch or has blue lips
- Is breathing very fast, or struggling to breathe
- Stops or pauses breathing
- Has a fit (a seizure)
- Has a rash that does not fade when pressed (the glass test)
- Is under 3 months old and has a temperature above 38°C (a fever) or under 36°C

**Please attend
your local
Emergency
Department
or
call 999**



AMBER

- Blood in their poo or wee
- Their tummy pain does not go away even after paracetamol or ibuprofen
- They cannot keep any drinks down
- Show signs of dehydration such as
- Not weeing for 12 hours or less than 3 wet nappies a day
- Sunken eyes, very dry mouth or shed no tears when crying
- Sunken soft spot on their head (in babies)
- They have a temperature of 38°C or above (a fever) for more than 5 days

**Please
ring
your GP
or 111
for
advice**

GREEN

- You can care for your child at home. Keep checking on them and get help if you are worried.



To access more about this and to be able to read this in different languages, please visit our Paediatric Emergency Department webpage on <https://mft.nhs.uk/diarrhoea-and-vomiting>

