

Vomiting (Baby on Formula)

Definition

- Vomiting is the forceful emptying (throwing up) of what is in the stomach
- It's normal for nausea (upset stomach) to come before each bout of vomiting

Health Information

Vomiting Scale

- **Mild:** 1 - 2 times/day
- **Moderate:** 3 - 7 times/day
- **Severe:** Vomits everything, nearly everything or 8 or more times/day
- Severity relates even more to how long the vomiting goes on for. At the start of the illness, it's common to vomit everything. This can last for 3 or 4 hours. Then often changes to mild vomiting.
- The main risk of vomiting is dehydration.

Dehydration: How to Know

- Dehydration means that the body has lost too much fluid. These are signs of dehydration:
- Decreased urine (no urine in more than 8 hours) happens early in dehydration. So does a dark yellow color. If the urine is light straw colored, your child is not dehydrated.
- Dry tongue and inside of the mouth. Dry lips are not helpful.
- Dry eyes with decreased or absent tears
- In babies, a depressed or sunken soft spot
- Fussy, tired out or acting ill. If your child is alert, happy and playful, he or she is not dehydrated.
- A child with severe dehydration becomes too weak to stand. Can also be dizzy when trying to stand.

Causes

- **Main Cause.** Stomach infection from a stomach virus (such as Rotavirus). The illness starts with vomiting. Watery loose stools follow within 12-24 hours.
- **Coughing.** Hard coughing can also cause your child to throw up.
- **Serious Causes.** Vomiting alone (without diarrhea) should stop within about 24 hours. If it lasts over 24 hours, you must think about more serious causes.

Prevention of Spread to Others

- Careful hand washing after touching vomit, using the toilet or changing diapers.

Care Advice

1. Overview:

- Most vomiting is caused by a viral infection of the stomach.
- Vomiting is the body's way of protecting the lower gut.
- The good news is that stomach illnesses last only a short time.
- Here is some care advice that should help.

2. **Formula-fed Babies, Give Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) for 8 Hours:**
 - If vomits once, keep on regular formula.
 - If more than once, offer ORS for 8 hours. If you don't have ORS, use formula until you can get some.
 - ORS is a special fluid that can help your child stay hydrated. You can use Pedialyte or the store brand of ORS. It can be bought in food or drug stores.
 - Spoon or syringe feed small amounts. Give 1-2 teaspoons (5-10 ml) every 5 minutes.
 - After 4 hours without throwing up, double the amount.
 - **Return to Formula.** After 8 hours without throwing up, go back to regular formula.
3. **Stop Solid Foods:**
 - Avoid all solid foods and baby foods in kids who are vomiting.
 - After 8 hours without throwing up, gradually add them back.
 - Start with starchy foods that are easy to digest. Examples are cereals, crackers and bread.
 - Return to a normal diet in 24-48 hours.
4. **Do Not Give Medicines:**
 - Stop using any drug that is over-the-counter for 8 hours.
 - **Fever.** Mild fevers don't need to be treated with any drugs. For higher fevers, you can use an acetaminophen (Tylenol) suppository. This is a form of the drug you put in the rectum.
 - **Call your doctor if:** Your child vomits a drug ordered by your doctor.
5. **Sleep:**
 - Help your child go to sleep for a few hours.
 - Reason: Sleep often empties the stomach and removes the need to vomit.
 - Your child doesn't have to drink anything if his stomach feels upset.
6. **What to Expect:**
 - Vomiting from a viral illness often stops in 12 to 24 hours.
 - Mild vomiting and nausea may last up to 3 days.
 - Watery loose stools may follow vomiting in 12-24 hours. This can be normal. Diarrhea alone can last 1-2 weeks.
7. **For Vomiting with Diarrhea:**
 - If your child is having both vomiting and diarrhea, follow the advice for vomiting.
 - If your child cannot keep down fluids and diarrhea is bad, call back. Reason: increased risk for dehydration.
 - If your child starts having diarrhea alone, keep on a regular diet. If the diarrhea is more than mild, offer extra formula. For severe diarrhea, also give 1-2 ounces (30-60 ml) of Pedialyte for every large watery stool.
8. **Return to Child Care:**
 - Your child can return to child care after the vomiting and fever are gone.

Call Your Doctor If

- Vomits clear fluids for more than 8 hours
- Vomiting lasts more than 24 hours
- Signs of dehydration occur
- Diarrhea becomes severe or contains blood
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Your child becomes worse

Pediatric Care Advice

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