

Diarrhea

Diarrhea is abnormally large and frequent watery bowel movements. Stool color and odor can be different. Most diarrhea is caused by a viral infection. There are no good medicines for those viruses. Antibiotics only work for bacteria. Antibiotics also kill good bacteria in the intestines and can cause abdominal pain or diarrhea. Eating a proper diet while you are ill will help you feel better faster and prevent dehydration.

The issue is simply to replace fluids faster than we lose them... progressively more difficult the bigger you are.....

The proper diet involves resting the stomach for several hours. Then begin with small amounts of fluids such as GATORADE sipped with a straw at room temperature or FLAT SODA at room temperature—SIPS ONLY! If you take no more than a shot glass full and wait 15 minutes (for the rolling of the stomach to stop!)... usually the next shot glass goes down a little easier.

As you begin to tolerate those fluids, you can also have Jell-O with a little banana in it, weak tea or apple juice or clear soup such as bouillon broth. If you get really sick of those boring foods, you may try scrambled eggs with a little cheese in it or cheese sandwich. Easy-to-digest foods like hot cereal, rice, toast, carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes, apple or melon given in very small amounts are good healing foods too. Probiotics are in yogurt, but since that is dairy, just take a teaspoon a few times a day to promote the good bacteria for your gut.

FOODS you should AVOID are fat, fried foods, meat spicy foods, acidic foods (orange and grapefruit juice), milk and milk products including creamed soups, cheese, etc.

When you are feeling better: NO BIG MAC YET! Even though you may feel cured, your gut will take three days to heal well enough for dairy products and fatty foods. START with crackers, toast, applesauce, bananas, or rice. Next add chicken or fish. Start milk in very small amounts, as most of us quickly lose the ability to digest lactose, so milk might go right through us until we build that enzyme up.

WHEN TO CALL THE DOCTOR – The things that make us more concerned that your diarrhea might be more than a simple viral infection include:

1. Blood in stool or in the vomit
2. Persistence of diarrhea for 3 days despite proper diet
3. High fever (over 102)
4. Persistent *vomiting* despite proper diet
5. Continuous pain over one spot of the abdomen
6. Lethargy or sleepiness
7. Dehydration (dry mouth decreased urine)

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