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# Diarrhea

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

Diarrhea can be caused by many reasons. Some people have cramping and nausea in addition to the loose watery bowel movements. Diarrhea can be caused by a change in routine or diet, a minor infection, medications, surgery, or radiation treatments. For both adults and children, having diarrhea can lead to dehydration (a loss of too much fluid from the body).

## GUIDELINES

1. Cut down on solid foods for 24 to 48 hours.
2. Drink more fluids.
  - For adults, sport electrolyte drinks like Gatorade may be helpful.
  - For children, in addition to popsicles or Gatorade, special drinks, such as Pedialyte, may be recommended by your doctor or nurse.
  - Do not give infants or children soups or broth.
3. Take oral or axillary (under the arm) temperature regularly.
4. Antidiarrhea medications may help.
  - Do not use these medications for children unless your doctor directs you to.
  - These medications should be used only for 24 to 48 hours.
5. Wash your hands carefully after using the toilet.
6. Treat rash and skin irritation.
  - Your nurse or doctor can suggest an ointment to place on the skin around the rectum
- For diaper rash
  - Change the diaper as soon as it is wet or has stool,
  - Wash the baby's bottom every time you change the diaper,
  - Use mild soap and water to clean the skin and skinfolds,
  - Rinse the skin well and gently pat the skin dry,
  - Lay your baby on his or her stomach on a towel or diaper for a short time (by leaving the diaper off, the air will help healing of the skin),
  - Your doctor may order an ointment for the skin,
  - Do not use diaper or skin wipes; they can irritate the skin,
  - Do not use baby powder,
  - Call your nurse or doctor if the rash does not improve.
7. Call your nurse or doctor
  - Immediately with signs of dehydration
    - Decreased amount and numbers of urination; for children no urination for 5 to 6 hours,
    - Dry mouth,
    - Eyes that look sunken with dark circles,
    - Feeling weak, tired, and listless; children may be less active and very sleepy.
  - If diarrhea continues for more than 48 hours; for infants and children you may be directed to call after 24 hours.

## OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

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