

WHAT IS DIARRHEA?

Diarrhea is not a disease. It is a symptom that consists in an increase in the number of stools per day and / or an increase in the looseness of stools and usually only lasts a few days.

WHAT OTHER SYMPTOMS ACCOMPANY DIARRHEA?

- Pain.
- Tiredness.
- Nausea, vomiting.
- Crampy pain in the abdomen.
- Fever.
- Loss of appetite.

TYPES OF DIARRHEA

Diarrhea can be **acute** or **chronic**.

- Acute diarrhea appears suddenly and does not last more than three days.
- Chronic diarrhea lasts longer (more than 3 weeks) and can be a symptom of a more serious problem.

THE MOST COMMON CAUSES OF DIARRHEA ARE:

- Some medications, especially antibiotics, iron and laxatives.
- Some infections, especially intestinal infections caused by viruses or bacteria.
- Diseases such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn's disease in which diarrhea may become chronic.
- Food poisoning. People who are visiting other countries and eat food or drink water contaminated by bacteria, viruses or parasites can develop traveler's diarrhea.

HOW CAN WE PREVENT DIARRHEA?

- Wash thoroughly raw fruits and vegetables.
- Encourage everyone in the family to wash their hands with soap and water after using the bathroom.
- In the summer avoid eating sauces made from raw eggs.

When traveling to a tropical area:

- Avoid drinking tap water or using ice cubes made from tap water.
- Avoid using tap water to brush your teeth.
- Do not eat raw or rare meat or fish.

HOW CAN WE TREAT DIARRHEA?

It is very important **to replace fluids** lost through diarrhea. As soon as diarrhea starts make sure you are drinking enough liquid to prevent dehydration.

Adults and children older than 3 years old should not eat any solid food during the first 6-8 hours after diarrhea has started.

When the number of stools is less than 3-4 a day, you can gradually start to eat small amounts of bland foods until returning to normal eating habits. During this time it is advisable to continue drinking enough liquids.

WHAT IS AN ORS (ORAL REHYDRATION SALT)?

These are powders that usually contain: glucose, sodium bicarbonate, sodium and potassium chloride. You mix them with bottled water and keep them in the fridge. Small amounts drunk every few minutes may stay down better than a large amount all at once.

They are used to replace fluids, minerals and nutrients loss that occurs in diarrhea.

WHAT TYPE OF FOODS CAN I EAT?

- Rice soup, carrot soup, fish soup, carrot pureé.
- Boiled rice.
- Soft-boiled egg, hard-boiled egg, omelette.
- Boiled fish and chicken.
- Ham, toast.
- Grated apple, quince, ripe banana.
- Unsweetened yogurt.

It is recommended:

- Not to drink milk.
- To avoid green vegetables (lettuce, spinach, beet...) since they have a laxative effect.
- To avoid sweets, chocolates, sugar...
- Not to drink alcohol and soda beverages.

**ASK YOUR DOCTOR OR PHARMACIST
BEFORE TAKING ANY MEDICINE TO STOP
DIARRHEA.**

WHEN SHOULD I SEE THE DOCTOR?

- If diarrhea lasts more than 3 days.
- If any of these symptoms appears: High fever.
 - Intense vomiting.
 - Blood in stools.
 - Acute abdominal pain.
- Patients with asthma, diabetes, ulcer or heart disease.

DIARRHEA IN YOUNG BABIES

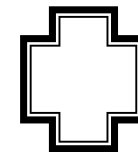
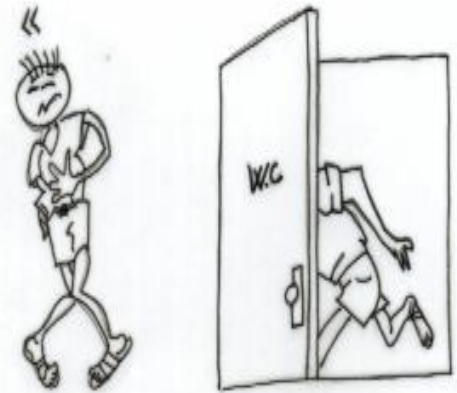
It is important to consider that stools in babies are usually quite loose, so in many cases he/she will not have diarrhea. This 'false diarrhea' keeps the baby hungry and gaining weight in spite of these frequent stools.

In case of diarrhea, during **the first 6-8 hours replace fluid loss** with oral rehydration salts (low in sodium). Try small amounts (teaspoons) every 10-15 minutes. When the child is able to keep the drink down, slowly increase how much you give.

After 6-8 hours you can start feeding the child:

- If you are breastfeeding, **continue to give your baby breastmilk**. Breastmilk has all the fluids and electrolytes needed to prevent dehydration.
- If you feed your baby formula, try **preparing the baby's bottle using rice water** instead of plain water while your baby is sick. You can also try using half amount of formula powder as usual.
- If your baby already eats pap, you can prepare it with **water, carrot, chicken breast and rice**.
- If the baby eats fruit pap, you can prepare it with **banana and apple**.
- If the baby eats cereals pap, it is better to prepare it with **rice meal**.

DIARRHEA



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