

Vomiting (Baby on Breastmilk)

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. Breastfed Babies - Reduce the Amount Per Feeding:
 - If vomits once, nurse 1 side every 1 to 2 hours.
 - If more than once, nurse for 5 minutes every 30 to 60 minutes. After 4 hours without throwing up, return to regular nursing.
 - If continues to vomit, switch to pumped breastmilk. ORS (such as Pedialyte) is rarely needed in breastfed babies. It can be used if vomiting becomes worse.
 - Spoon or syringe feed small amounts of pumped breastmilk. Give 1-2 teaspoons (5-10 ml) every 5 minutes.
 - After 4 hours without throwing up, return to regular feeding at the breast. Start with small feedings of 5 minutes every 30 minutes. As your baby keeps down the smaller amounts, slowly give more.
3. Pumped Breastmilk Bottle-Fed Infants - Reduce the Amount per Feeding:
 - If vomits once and bottle-feeding breastmilk, give half the regular amount. Do this every 1-2 hours.
 - If vomits more than once within last 2 hours, give 1 ounce (30 mL). Do this every 30 to 60 minutes.
 - If continues to vomit, give 1-2 teaspoons (5-10 mL). Do this every 5 minutes. If not tolerating breastmilk, switch to ORS (e.g., Pedialyte).
 - After 4 hours without vomiting, return to regular feedings. Start with 1 ounce (30 mL) every 30 minutes and slowly increase as tolerated.
4. 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 normal diet in 24-48 hours.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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 breastmilk (or formula if needed). For severe diarrhea, also give 1-2 ounces (30-60 ml) of Pedialyte for every large watery stool.
9. 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

Author: Barton Schmitt MD, FAAP

Copyright 2000-2021 Schmitt Pediatric Guidelines LLC

Disclaimer: This health information is for educational purposes only. You the reader assume full responsibility for how you choose to use it. The information contained in this handout should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. Listing of any resources does not imply an endorsement.