

Keeping Baby Healthy:

Diarrhea in children 12 months to 5 years old

What is diarrhea?

Diarrhea is a large, watery bowel movement that:

- Can have a bad smell
- Soaks into the diaper or underpants, or runs down the child's leg
- Can be a greenish color
- Might be mixed with mucus or blood
- Occurs more often than your child's usual bowel movement pattern in 24 hours.

Your child might have a fever and/or vomit, too.

What to know:

- Your child can get dehydrated very quickly from diarrhea.
- "Dehydrated" means that your child has lost too much water from his body.
- Germs, food, and some medicines can cause diarrhea.
- Children might get diarrhea when they are sick, like with a cold or earache.
- Drinking too much fruit juice or eating lots of fruit can make a child have loose bowel movements. This might NOT be diarrhea!
- Children have their own pattern of bowel movements. Think about what is normal for your child if you think she might have diarrhea.
- Most diarrhea stops by itself in a few days.
- Children who have diarrhea will usually get better faster if they eat and drink.

What to do:

Offer your child foods like:

- Pasta
- Potatoes
- Beans
- Toast
- Cooked cereal, like oatmeal or grits
- Rice
- Non-salty crackers
- Well-cooked vegetables
- Bananas
- Well-cooked lean meat, chicken or fish.

What to do:

- Wash your hands after you clean your child or change your child's diapers.
- After a bowel movement, wash your child's skin and pat it dry.
- Teach older children to wash and dry their hands after they use the bathroom.
- You might want to put diaper cream or petroleum jelly on your child's diaper area after cleaning it.

What **NOT** to do:

- **Do not give your child aspirin!**
- Do not use anti-diarrhea medicines unless your child's doctor or nurse tells you to.
- Do not give your child only clear liquids unless your child's nurse or doctor says to do so.
- Do not give your child fat-free milk, boiled milk or honey.
- Do not feed your child sweet liquids or foods like juices, soda, sweet tea, gelatin desserts or popsicles.
- Do not feed your child spicy or fatty foods.

Do not give your child salty soups or crackers.



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continued...

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Call your child's nurse or doctor if:

- Your child starts to vomit.
- The diarrhea does not stop in 48 hours.
- Your child acts VERY sleepy or fussy.
- Your child has a fever of 101°Fahrenheit or higher under the arm.
- Your child does not wet a diaper (pee) at least once in four hours.
- Your child wets a diaper or pees less than five times in 24 hours.
- Your child is sick, such as with an earache or cold.
- Your child's mouth is dry and sticky.
- Your child has no tears when crying.
- Your child has blood or mucus in the bowel movement or the bowel movement is black.
- Your child has stomach pain.
- There is any significant change in your child's behavior.