

## Gastro-enteritis - Diarrhoea and Vomiting

This is either caused by a virus from contact with someone else with the illness or more rarely, a bacteria from something you have eaten, for example; improperly prepared or inadequately cooked food.

The symptoms include diarrhea, vomiting and stomach cramps, and usually improve within 48 hours.

At the onset of symptoms you should eat nothing for 24 hours. Sip clear fluids or squash but **not milk**. Gradually increase the amounts as you feel better. After 24 hours start on a light diet but **avoid dairy products**. It is important to avoid dehydration, particularly in children, and when traveling in hot climates. Rehydration tablets, such as **Dioralyte** or **Rehidrat** can be purchased from most chemists. Breast fed babies with symptoms should continue to feed as normal.



You can take paracetamol if necessary, 2 tabs every 4-6 hours, but not exceeding 8 in 24 hours. **Do not take aspirin** as this may irritate the stomach. Paracetamol reduces your temperature and alleviates some of the abdominal pain. Anti-motility agents such as loperamide can reduce frequency of diarrhea but may lead to constipation. They may prove useful, if for example, you are stuck on an aeroplane. **However, they should not be used by people with high fever with blood in the stools.** Use should be discontinued if symptoms persist beyond 48 hours. Loperamide, etc. should not be used in infants younger than four years of age.



Seek medical advice if you are:

1. **Passing blood in stools**
2. **Diabetic and unsure, Re: Calorie intake**

To reduce the risk of passing infection to others you should wash your hands regularly and avoid handling food.