

VOMITING AND DIARRHEA

VOMITING

Children who are not dehydrated should continue to eat a regular diet, and infants who are breastfeeding should continue to do so unless the parent(s) is told otherwise by their clinician. Dehydrated children require rehydration (replacement of lost fluid). After being rehydrated, many children will be able to resume a normal diet.

When clear liquids are recommended, the best choices are the commercially prepared oral rehydration solutions for rehydration (eg, Pedialyte®). Apple, pear, and cherry juice, and other beverages with high sugar content should be avoided. Sports drinks (eg, Gatorade®) should also be avoided since they have too much sugar and have inappropriate electrolyte levels.

It is not necessary to restrict a child's diet to clear liquids or the BRAT diet (bananas, rice, applesauce, toast). Neither contains enough nutrients, and giving only clear liquids for several days can actually prolong diarrhea (called "starvation stools"). After they can hold down water or Pedialyte in increasing amounts you can start them on foods such as cereals, soups (mild), fruit, and vegetables. Again the rule is to go with small amounts and go slow. It is ok for them to be a little hungry. If you advance too quickly they could start vomiting again.

If the above is not working or if they just look very ill call your physician.

DIARRHEA

For diarrhea the most important thing is to stay hydrated. Most children with diarrhea tolerate full-strength cow's milk products. It is not necessary to dilute or avoid milk products (except in children with known allergies to cow's milk). Recommended foods include a combination of complex carbohydrates (rice, wheat, potatoes, bread), lean meats, yogurt, fruits, and vegetables. High-fat foods are more difficult to digest and should be avoided. Therefore for diarrhea drink water, Pedialyte or dilute Gatorade (this is different than vomiting). Take Pepto-Bismol in doses recommended for age at least four (4) times daily. Imodium is also ok to use in older persons. As far as diet, avoid milk and eat bland foods as above. It is best to eat frequent small amounts. The bottom line is that fluids, water, are more important than food. Staying hydrated is what is important.

If there is severe, persistent, or bloody diarrhea call your physician.