

Gastroenteritis

- Common paediatric problems
- Usually self recovery but may be life-threatening.

Contagiousness:

- Diarrheal infections are contagious.
- Spread from person to person via dirty hands.
- Direct contact with fecal matter, contaminated food or water, and some pets.

Home treatment:

- Aim to replace fluid and electrolytes
- Switch to a milder diet for 1 or 2 days.
- Use special drinks to replace body fluids quickly, or simply give more liquids.
- Children with diarrhoea should not attend school
- Hand washing is important to prevent spread

When should parents call doctor:

- Severe or prolonged episode of diarrhea
- Fever, vomiting, or severe abdominal pain
- If the diarrheal stools contain blood or mucus
- Signs of dehydration (dry lips and tongue, skin that is pale and dry, sunken eyes, listlessness or decreased activity, and decreased urination such as fewer than six wet diapers a day in an infant).

Professional treatment:

- Maintain adequate fluid intake with appropriate rehydrating solutions.
- Never rehydrate with water alone because it does not contain adequate amounts of sodium, potassium, and other important nutrients.
- Stool sample for culture
- Diarrheal infections caused by viruses and most bacteria are not usually treated with medicines because most children recover on their own.