

When to contact your GP

Contact your GP or GP out of hours service (eg NHS 24) if your child:

- Is being sick very frequently and does not improve after taking 5ml fluid every 5 minutes for an hour or so.
- Becomes dehydrated e.g. peeing less, dry mouth, drowsy.
- Becomes floppy, has a headache, stiff neck or a rash.
- Has severe tummy pain.
- Has vomit which is green or contains blood.
- Has blood in the diarrhoea
- Has been vomiting for more than two days.

You should also contact your GP practice if your child

- Does not seem to be getting any better after a few days
- Has frequent episodes of D&V
- Has other symptoms that don't fit with viral D&V

as there may be something else causing their symptoms.

Where to go for further information and advice

Your own GP practice

Community Pharmacies (in Lerwick, Brae and Scalloway)

Contact NHS 24 by phoning 111 or going to www.nhs24.com

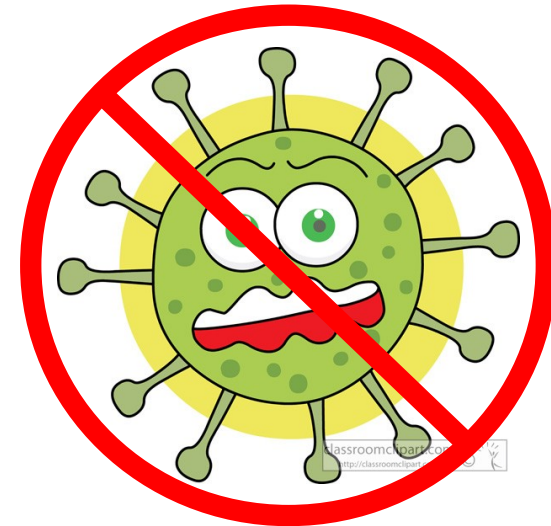
Visit NHS Inform on www.nhsinform.co.uk

If you need this leaflet in a different language or format, please
phone 01595 743340

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Diarrhoea and vomiting



A Guide for Parents

What bugs cause diarrhoea and vomiting (D&V)?

There are several viruses that can cause D&V, or gastroenteritis, also often known as 'spewy bug'. You have probably heard of norovirus (or 'winter vomiting virus') which is the commonest cause in adults. There are other similar viruses that often cause D &V in babies and children. You can catch these viruses at any time of the year and they all spread from person to person very easily.

Diarrhoea and vomiting can also be caused by other bugs, such as salmonella and campylobacter. These are often picked up from contaminated food or drink, or animals, and cause food poisoning. Other, non-infectious, conditions can also cause D&V, such as food intolerance.

Symptoms

As well as D&V, these viruses can also cause other symptoms including :

- Mild fever
- Headaches
- Stomach cramps
- Aching limbs

Unfortunately there is no cure for viral D&V and although it is unpleasant, you just have to let it run its course. The symptoms usually last 24 –48 hours.

What should I do if my child catches it?

- Offer your child plenty of drinks, to avoid dehydration. eg sugary drinks, flat fizzy drinks or water.
- **If your child is being sick very frequently, give them 5ml (one teaspoon) of fluid every 5 minutes. Use a syringe or a teaspoon to do this and keep going for 1-2 hours, until they feel / look better. If they do not improve, then contact your GP surgery.**
- You can give paracetamol / liquid paracetamol for fevers, aches or pains. Always make sure you use the correct dosage for your child's age and follow the instructions on the bottle or packet very carefully.

Preventing the spread of the spewy bug

The spewy bug is very contagious and very easily passed from person to person. To help reduce the spread of the virus, follow these simple rules:

- To help prevent spread, children must stay off school and nursery for **AT LEAST 48 hours AFTER** the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting. For example if the last vomit is at 6 am on Monday morning, they cannot go back to school until Wednesday morning at the earliest. This is because you can still be infectious for up to 48 hours after the symptoms have disappeared. They may need to be off school longer than this if they are still feeling unwell in themselves.
- **The 48 hour 'rule' also applies to staying away from anywhere where they may be in contact with other children or adults**, for example parties, childminders, after school clubs, youth clubs, swimming, football training, Sunday Teas, weddings, dances and other social events etc.
- Particular care must be taken to avoid visiting anyone in hospital or care homes, or anyone else who is more susceptible to the infection e.g. new babies.
- If your child only has diarrhoea and not vomiting, or only has vomiting, the same rules still apply!
- You do **not** need to keep your child off school just because the spewy bug is going round, unless they have a specific medical reason for needing to avoid it.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water, especially after going to the toilet and before eating. Make sure your children do the same. Alcohol based hand gels are not very effective against the viruses that cause diarrhoea and vomiting.
- Don't share towels or flannels.
- Clean any surfaces or objects that could be contaminated with the virus: and regularly clean toilets and sinks etc.

Adults should also follow the 48 hour rule whenever possible: and **always** if their work involves food handling or working with vulnerable people (eg in a health or care setting).