

# Nausea, Vomiting, and Diarrhea

## WHAT IS IT?

The symptoms of nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, which is often called “the stomach flu” or gastroenteritis, are often caused by a virus in the intestines. This is different from influenza (the flu), which is a respiratory infection.

## WHAT CAUSES IT ?

It is usually caused by a coming in contact with a sick person or ingesting contaminated food or water. Symptoms can vary and tend to appear 1-3 days after you are infected. Most symptoms resolve within 48-72 hours, however, some symptoms can linger for up to 10 days. There is no “cure”, so managing symptoms while your body heals is best.

## SYMPTOMS

- Loose and watery stool
- Nausea, vomiting or both
- Abdominal cramping
- Generalized body aches
- Headache

## WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL CARE:

- Unable to keep clear liquids down for >24 hours.
- Vomiting for more than 2 days.
- Vomiting blood or have bloody diarrhea.
- Fever > 101 F.
- Signs of dehydration: excessive thirst, dizziness, severe weakness, dark yellow or little to no urine.

## SELF CARE TIPS

- Don't try to eat or drink anything while you are vomiting frequently.
- When your stomach begins to settle, try SIPS of clear liquids only, limit to 8 ounces per hour initially. If you are doing well with sips, try to start drinking larger amounts slowly.
- Examples of clear liquids are: ice, water, soft drinks, tea, Kool-Aid, ice popsicles, sports drinks, Jell-O.
- When you are tolerating fluids well and have not had any vomiting for at least 8 hrs. You can try the **BRAT diet**: Bananas, Rice, Applesauce and Toast. You can also try plain bagels, saltine crackers and baked potatoes. No cream soups, meats, vegetables or salads.
- When you are doing well on the BRAT diet for at least 24 hrs., gradually begin eating a regular diet. Avoid any dairy products, spicy and fried foods as well as caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine for another day or so.
- Try over-the-counter medications: Bonine or Dramamine Less Drowsy (meclizine 25 mg.) every 6-8 hours as needed for nausea. Pepto Bismol or Immodium AD may be effective for diarrhea. Tylenol is a good choice for fever or aches because it is gentle on the stomach. **CAUTION: Always follow package instructions.**

The information presented here is not intended to be used for the diagnosis of a health problem or as a substitute for consulting a licensed medical professional. When using an Over-the-Counter medication please be sure to follow the package instructions. [Contact Health Services](#) if you have any additional questions, concerns or to make an appointment.