

## PATIENT INFORMATION BROCHURE

# What You Need to Know about **GASTRO** (a.k.a Stomach Flu)



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[www.hoteldieu.com](http://www.hoteldieu.com)

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Please refrain from wearing scented products.

# What is Stomach Flu? (a.k.a. Gastroenteritis/Gastro)

- It is inflammation of the lining of the stomach and intestines.
- Most of the time it is an infection caused by a virus.
- Your child may have diarrhea, vomiting, belly pain, or fever.
- It is very common in children aged 18 months through 5 years.
- Children may have 5 – 10 days of diarrhea (diarrhea should be starting to improving after 5 days).
- Children may have 1 – 3 days of vomiting.
- The most serious side effect of the stomach flu is **dehydration**. Dehydration means your body does not have as much water and fluids as it should.

When a child has the Stomach Flu the main goal is to **prevent dehydration** while waiting for the virus to pass.



## **To Prevent Dehydration:**

- Give your child small amounts of fluid often, such as water, formula, Pedialyte® Enfalyte® or Gastrolyte.
- DO NOT give your child juice, soda or Gatorade®.

## **To Treat Dehydration:**

### **Breastfeeding:**

- keep feeding as usual but for less time and more often. For example, if your baby usually nurses for 10 minutes on each side every 3 hours, try 5 minutes each side every 1 ½ hours. Between feedings give your child a specialty fluid (e.g. Pedialyte®).
- If your baby vomits wait ½ hour and give a specialty fluid (e.g. Pedialyte®) 5mL/ 1 tsp. every 10 minutes for a few hours. Then go back to breastfeeding again.

### **Children who take a bottle, or eat food:**

- Choose a specialty formulated fluid (e.g. Pedialyte® Enfalyte® Gastrolyte®) and follow the guide on the back page until complete.
- Even though it won't be easy and may sometimes be difficult, it is important to continue to give your child these fluids even when your child does not want to take them.

## Seek medical attention if:

- your child shows signs of dehydration such as:
  - Extreme thirst
  - Restlessness, or tired but irritable when touched
  - Eyes look slightly sunken
  - Mouth and tongue is dry or sticky
  - No tears when crying
  - Has not peed in more than 12 hours
- your child still won't take any fluids to prevent dehydration, even after repeated attempts
- there is worsening of vomiting, diarrhea or tummy pain
- your child is less than 3 months old and has a fever
- your child is less than 3 months old and has had diarrhea for 2 days
- your child has had a fever for 3 days.
- your child has vomiting/diarrhea **PLUS** one of the following chronic conditions: cardiac, metabolic (e.g. diabetes, PKU), or failure to thrive.
- there is blood in your child's stool or vomit.

## Home Supplies

- Medicine to treat a fever, e.g. acetaminophen (**Tylenol®**, **Tempra®**)
- Digital Thermometer
- Specialty formulated fluid (e.g. **Pedialyte®** **Enfalyte®** **Gastrolyte®**). If you keep these in the fridge they will taste better.
- Hand sanitizers - in the kitchen where food is prepared.
- Diaper rash cream that contains zinc.

## Help Stop the Stomach Flu from Spreading:



- Hand washing – make sure everyone in the home washes their hands well:
  - With hand sanitizer
  - With liquid soap (lather for at least 15 seconds)
  - After going to the toilet (children & parents)
  - After changing diapers
  - Before handling food (children & parents)
- Children with the stomach flu should not share food, utensils, toys, etc.
- Children with the stomach flu should not attend daycare or school until vomiting or diarrhea has stopped.

## Discharge Planning and Home Care: (Nurse or Doctor to check off)

- Prevent skin irritation and breakdown (change diapers frequently, wash diaper area with mild soap and water, apply zinc ointment)
- Good hand washing
- Continue specialty formulated fluid when you get home.
- After your child has finished the fluid guide (see next page) **it is important to continue to give them small amounts of fluid frequently.** This is also the time to begin giving them small amounts of their normal diet.
- Don't give fatty foods or sugary foods or drinks such as juice, soda, candy etc. as they can make diarrhea worse.
- Make an appointment when you get home to follow up with your family doctor in a few days.

If you have further questions, you may  
contact Telehealth Ontario at:

**1-866-797-0000**



or check out the following websites:

**[www.aboutkidshealth.ca](http://www.aboutkidshealth.ca)**

**[www.trekk.ca](http://www.trekk.ca)**

**[www.CDC.gov/](http://www.CDC.gov/)**





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