

When to seek urgent advice

- See a doctor urgently, if:-
 - you vomit blood;
 - you pass blood from your back passage;
 - you have a fainting episode;
 - you become so light headed that you can't stand up;
 - your diarrhoea doesn't stop after seven days;
 - your vomiting doesn't stop after two days; or if
 - despite trying your best to rehydrate, your urine becomes very dark in colour.

Support

- For general medical advice please use the NHS website, the NHS 111 service, walk-in-centres, or your GP.
- **NHS** website provides online health information and guidance www.nhs.uk
- **NHS 111** phone line offers medical help and advice from trained advisers supported by nurses and paramedics. Available 24 hours a day. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.
- There are walk-in and urgent treatment services at Brighton Station, in Crawley and at Lewes Victoria Hospital. www.bsuh.nhs.uk/services/ae/
- **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)** can be contacted with your comments and concerns, and to provide general support. PALS@bsuh.nhs.uk
RSCH: 01273 664683
PRH: 01444 448678
PALS, Royal Sussex County Hospital,
Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE

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NHS

Brighton and Sussex
University Hospitals
NHS Trust

Diarrhoea & vomiting Advice for patients

Emergency Department

Royal Sussex County Hospital
Level 5, Thomas Kemp Tower,
Eastern Road, Brighton BN2 5BE
01273 696955 extn. 64261

Princess Royal Hospital
Lewes Road, Haywards Heath RH16 4EX
01444 448745
www.bsuh.nhs.uk

Overview

- An episode of diarrhoea & vomiting is extremely common and is usually caused by a viral infection. As a result antibiotics don't help and may make you feel worse.
- It is important to keep drinking fluids. It is better to drink squashes than water. You should avoid fizzy drinks as these may make you feel worse. Oral rehydration fluid can be bought over the counter and can help to replace important substances you are losing.
- You should try and drink a little fluid often. Even if you vomit or have diarrhoea after drinking fluids it is likely that you will have absorbed some and this will help you feel better.
- You are extremely infectious. You should wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after every time you go to the toilet. You should not prepare food. Ideally you should use your own towel.
- You should not return to work until 48 hours after your last vomit or episode of diarrhoea.
- You should eat only if you feel hungry and should try light, plain foods such as bread. You should avoid rich, fatty foods as these will make you feel worse.

Typical symptoms

- Symptoms usually start a few hours or days after picking up a bug. Typical symptoms include:
 - Sudden diarrhoea;
 - Feeling sick (nausea);
 - Being sick (vomiting);
 - A stomach ache or cramps.
- You may also have a temperature.

Treating yourself

- You can generally treat diarrhoea and vomiting at home. The symptoms will usually get better on their own within a week as long as you can keep hydrated.

Things to do

- Drink lots of fluids to avoid dehydration, such as water and squash – if you're well hydrated, your urine should be light yellow or clear.
- Wash your hands after going to the toilet and before you eat.
- Clean toilet seats, flush handles, taps, surfaces and door handles every day
- Wash dirty clothing and bedding separately on a hot wash.
- Stay at home and get plenty of rest.

- Return to your normal diet as soon as you feel able to eat.
- Take paracetamol to reduce pain or fever.

Things to consider

- Consider getting oral rehydration solution from your pharmacist if the symptoms last longer than a couple of days.
- Consider in discussion with your pharmacist about whether anti-diarrhoeal agents may benefit you.

Things to avoid

- Don't drink fizzy drinks or fruit juice – these can make your symptoms worse
- Don't return to school or work until your symptoms have stopped for two days. You're most infectious from when your symptoms start until two days after they've passed.
- Don't prepare food for other people, if possible.
- Don't share towels, flannels, cutlery and utensils.
- Don't use a swimming pool until two weeks after your symptoms stop.