

factors which preclude ORT. Monitoring the IV infusion is an important nursing function. The nurse must ensure that the correct fluid and electrolyte concentration is infused, that the flow rate is adjusted to deliver the desired volume in a given time, and that the IV site is maintained.

Accurate measurement of output is essential to determine whether renal blood flow is sufficient to permit the addition of potassium to the IV fluids. The nurse is responsible for examination of stools and collection of specimens for laboratory examination (see [Collection of Specimens, Chapter 20](#)). Take care when obtaining and transporting stools to prevent possible spread of infection. Transport stool specimens to the laboratory in appropriate containers and media according to hospital policy.

Diarrheal stools are highly irritating to the perianal skin, and extra care is needed to protect the skin of the diaper region from excoriation (see [Diaper Dermatitis, Chapter 10](#)). Avoid taking the temperature rectally because it stimulates the bowel, increasing passage of stool.

Support for the child and family involves the same care and consideration given to all hospitalized children (see [Chapter 19](#)). Keep parents informed of the child's progress and instruct them in the use of frequent and proper hand washing and the disposal of soiled diapers, clothes, and bed linens. Everyone caring for the child must be aware of “clean” areas and “dirty” areas, especially in the hospital, where the sink in the child's room is used for many purposes. Discard soiled diapers and linens in receptacles close to the bedside.

Prevention

The best intervention for diarrhea is prevention. The fecal–oral route spreads most infections, and parents need information about preventive measures, such as personal hygiene, protection of the water supply from contamination, and careful food preparation.

Nursing Alert

To reduce the risk of bacteria transmitted via food, encourage parents to: