EMC Express Care Open every day 10AM-8PM 817-503-8800 EMCexpresscare.com

**DEHYDRATION** 9/20/17 fg

Plain water is best if you are eating normally. However, if you are not eating food well (ex. because of nausea and vomiting), then it is important to replace electrolytes and sugar. A simple replacement fluid recommended on a short term basis (1 or 2 days) is the World Health Organization (WHO) Reduced Osmolarity Rehydrating Solution: 1 liter (or quart) of water, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 3 teaspoons sugar. Mix 1 liter at a time. Keep it within arm’s reach of the patient and encourage small frequent sips until urinating normally (drinking two to four liters with gastroenteritis and dehydration in adults, one to two liters in children).

Once your appetite is improving, advance to other clear liquids (ex. Gatorade mixed 1 to 1 with warm water, Pedialyte, Jell-O, soup broth). If tolerating fluids well, then advance to crackers, soup, and easily digested food. To decrease diarrhea, start more binding foods like the BRAT diet (Bananas, Rice, Apples, and Toast).

Over the counter medication (ex. Imodium) is recommended for profuse watery diarrhea more frequent than four times per day, but not for less frequent or less severe diarrhea. Prescription medications may be helpful to decrease nausea and vomiting.

Advance the diet slowly as your appetite and symptoms improve. Resist the urge to advance to a cheeseburger, fries, and a shake until you are much better. Meats, fats, and milk products can be restarted as diarrhea improves (milk added last after diarrhea has resolved). If symptoms worsen as the diet is advanced, back off to a more basic diet.

Seek medical attention if symptoms are worsening or, despite nausea medication and WHO Rehydrating Solution, urine output is less frequent (>8 hours) and in smaller amounts than expected of a darker, more concentrated urine. Urine output is a reliable measure of hydration status as determined by your kidneys. In contrast, vomiting and diarrhea can continue despite severe dehydration and is a frequent cause of death worldwide.