



Diarrhea in Babies

Diarrhea isn't just a loose stool; it's a watery stool that occurs up to 12 times a day.

- **If you're breastfeeding** (/English/ages-stages/baby/breastfeeding/Pages/default.aspx): A breastfed baby's stools are light yellow, soft, or even runny, and they often contain small pieces that look like seeds. Breastfed babies may pass stools with every breastfeeding.
- **If your baby is formula-fed** (/English/ages-stages/baby/feeding-nutrition/Pages/default.aspx): Babies who are formula-fed pass stools that are yellow to tan and about as firm as peanut butter.



Whether you breastfeed or formula-feed your baby, as he grows it's normal for you to see stools less frequently.

A greenish tinge to the stools is normal. As long as your baby is feeding and growing normally, you should not be concerned unless her stools are whitish and clay-like, watery and filled with mucus, or hard and dry. They should also not be black or bloody. If they are, call your pediatrician.

Call Your Pediatrician Right Away If Your Baby has Diarrhea and

- Is 3 months or younger
- Has a rectal temperature (/English/health-issues/conditions/fever/Pages/Fever-and-Your-Baby.aspx) of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher
- Is vomiting (/English/health-issues/conditions/abdominal/Pages/Infant-Vomiting.aspx)
- Lacks energy or is irritable and doesn't want to feed
- Has signs of dehydration (/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Dehydration.aspx), such as dry mouth, or has not passed urine for 3 or more hours

WARNING!

A baby can become dehydrated quickly. If your baby is younger than 3 months and has a fever as well as diarrhea, call your pediatrician at once. If your baby is older than 3 months and has had mild diarrhea with a slight fever for more than a day, check whether he's passing a normal amount of urine. Also check his temperature with a thermometer. Then call your pediatrician.

Coping with Diarrhea in Babies

A viral infection that causes vomiting and diarrhea may make your baby irritable for 1 or 2 days. If your baby is otherwise healthy, symptoms should clear up on their own. Your pediatrician will advise giving fluids to your baby to make up for the fluids and electrolytes (eg, sodium, potassium) lost with the diarrhea.

- **If you're breastfeeding:** Your pediatrician will probably recommend that you keep breastfeeding as usual.
- **If your baby is formula-fed:** Your pediatrician may instruct you to give your baby a special drink that contains electrolytes and sugar.

Pharmacies carry premixed drinks with the right balance of electrolytes for newborns and young infants; homemade solutions may not have the correct electrolyte balance and therefore should not be used.

Last Updated 6/10/2015**Source** The Big Book of Symptoms: A-Z Guide to Your Child's Health (Copyright © 2014 American Academy of Pediatrics) [Back to Top](#)

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