

Symptoms

Diarrhoea in babies and children

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Diarrhoea is poo that is more watery and loose than usual. It can cause poos to happen more often.

There are 2 main types of diarrhoea:

- acute diarrhoea
- chronic diarrhoea

Acute diarrhoea starts suddenly and lasts for less than 2 weeks. It's more common in babies and children.

Chronic diarrhoea lasts more than 2 weeks. It's usually caused by another health condition. It will not go away until the other condition is treated.

Symptoms of acute diarrhoea

Symptoms of acute diarrhoea usually last between 3 and 5 days.

They can include:

- loose or watery poo
- pooing more than 3 times a day
- vomiting or being sick
- [high temperature](#)
- tummy pains
- dehydration

Dehydration

Your child may become dehydrated if they have severe diarrhoea or vomiting.

Contact your GP immediately or go to the nearest hospital if:

- your child shows any signs of severe dehydration

Signs of dehydration are more likely in children who are:

- under 1 year of age
- breastfed and stop feeding
- not drinking fluids
- unwell with other long-term health problems

Symptoms of dehydration include:

- peeing less than normal
- weakness
- less energy than usual
- irritability
- fewer tears when crying
- a dry mouth, lips and tongue
- the soft spot on your baby's head (fontanelle) being sunken

Severe dehydration is more likely if your child has had:

- 6 or more bouts of diarrhoea in 24 hours
- 3 or more bouts of vomiting in 24 hours

When to get medical help

Most babies and toddlers recover from diarrhoea without needing to see a GP.

Contact your GP for advice if your child:

- has had diarrhoea more than 6 times in 24 hours
- has blood or mucus in their poo
- has vomited more than 3 times in 24 hours
- shows any symptoms of dehydration
- still has diarrhoea after 7 days
- has diarrhoea and has recently returned from travelling abroad

Take your child to the emergency department immediately if they:

- have any symptoms of severe dehydration
- have a high temperature that will not go down
- are getting worse fast
- have bad tummy pain

Older children will be able to tell you if they have a bad tummy pain. Younger children and babies will not be able to. If they will not stop crying it could be a sign that they are in pain.

Find an emergency department near you

A high temperature for babies under 3 months means 38 degrees Celsius and above. A high temperature for babies over 3 months means 39 degrees Celsius and above.

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