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Diarrhea in infants

Children who have diarrhea may have less energy, dry eyes, or a dry, sticky mouth. They may also not wet their diaper as often as usual.

Give your child fluids for the first 4 to 6 hours. At first, try 1 ounce (2 tablespoons or 30 milliliters [mL]) of fluid every 30 to 60 minutes. You can use:

- An over-the-counter drink, such as Pedialyte or Infalyte -- do not water down these drinks
- Pedialyte frozen fruit pops

If you are nursing, keep breastfeeding your infant. If you are using formula, use it at one half strength for 2 to 3 feedings after the diarrhea starts. Then begin regular formula feedings again.

If your child throws up, give only a little bit of fluid at a time. You can start with as little as 1 teaspoon (5 mL) of fluid every 10 to 15 minutes.

When your child is ready for regular foods, try:

- Bananas
- Chicken
- Crackers
- Pasta
- Rice cereal

Avoid:

- Apple juice
- Dairy products
- Fried foods
- Full-strength fruit juice

The BRAT diet was recommended by some health care providers in the past. There is not a lot of evidence that it is better than a standard diet for upset stomach, but it probably can't hurt.

BRAT stands for the different foods that make up the diet:

- Bananas
- Rice cereal
- Applesauce
- Toast

Bananas and other solid foods are most often not recommended for a child who is actively vomiting.

WHEN TO CONTACT THE PROVIDER

Contact your child's provider if your child has any of these symptoms:

- Blood or mucus in the stool
- Dry and sticky mouth
- Fever that does not go away
- Much less activity than normal (is not sitting up at all or looking around)
- No tears when crying
- No urination for 6 hours
- Stomach pain
- Vomiting

Alternative Names

When your infant has diarrhea; When your baby has diarrhea; BRAT diet; Diarrhea in children

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