

# Gastroenteritis in Children

## Patient information

**You have been given this information leaflet because your child has been diagnosed with gastroenteritis.**

Gastroenteritis is an infection of the stomach and bowels (gut). It is usually caused by viruses like the Rotavirus. These usually come from other people who have been unwell with the virus, or by putting dirty hands or toys in the child's mouth. Occasionally it can be caused by infected food.

### Symptoms of gastroenteritis

These may vary depending on the age of your child but include the following:

- High temperature
- Vomiting or poor feeding
- Abdominal pain
- Generally unwell and lethargic
- Offensive smelling or watery stool

### Investigation of gastroenteritis

No investigation is required unless your child has bloody diarrhoea or is severely dehydrated.

### Treatment of gastroenteritis

- Some children may need rehydration sachets that you can buy at a pharmacy (i.e. Dioralyte).
- **Increase the amount of drinks your child has.**
- **If breast fed, continue to do so.**
- If your child is vomiting, then give smaller feeds more frequently.
- If your child has a temperature, you can give paracetamol and/or ibuprofen. Please check the medication label prior to giving to your child.
- Don't give them anti-diarrhoeal medications unless instructed by your GP.
- Symptoms will usually settle on their own within 2 weeks.
- Avoid your child going to school until 48hrs symptom free.

**Remember to disinfect contaminated surfaces in the house, and wash bedding or towels separately to avoid spread among the family. Good hand washing prevents spread.**

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**Seek immediate medical advice if any of the following occur:**

- Unusually sleepy.
- Unable to take oral fluids due to vomiting.
- Your child has not drunk anything all day or not passed urine.
- Your child has blood in the diarrhoea or vomit.

## **Further Information**

For further advice and information about your condition:

Please choose from the following:

- 'NHS Patient Choices' website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- 'Making Lives Better' patient website: [www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info)
- Telephone NHS 111
- Contact your General Practitioner

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## **Contact details:**

- The James Cook University Hospital: 01642 850850  
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Version 1, Issue Date: October 2018, Revision Date: October 2020