



 Please call 911 if you think you have a medical emergency.

Food Poisoning Treatment

Self-Care at Home

Short episodes of vomiting and small amounts of diarrhea lasting less than 24 hours can usually be cared for at home.

- Do not eat solid food while nauseous or vomiting but drink plenty of fluids.
 - Small, frequent sips of clear liquids (those you can see through) are the best way to stay hydrated.
 - Avoid alcoholic, caffeinated, or sugary drinks, if possible. Over-the-counter rehydration products made for children such as Pedialyte and Rehydralyte are expensive but good to use if available.
 - Sports drinks such as Gatorade and Powerade are fine for adults if they are diluted with water because at full strength they contain too much sugar, which can worsen diarrhea.
- After successfully tolerating fluids, eating should begin slowly, when nausea and vomiting have stopped. Plain foods that are easy on the stomach should be started in small amounts. Consider eating rice, wheat, breads, potatoes, cereals (low-sugar cereals), lean meats, and chicken (not fried) to start. Milk can be given safely, although some people may experience additional stomach upset due to lactose intolerance.
- Most food poisonings do not require the use of over-the-counter medicines to stop diarrhea, but they are generally safe if used as directed. It is not recommended that these medications be given to children. If there is a question or concern, you should always check with your doctor.

Medical Treatment

The main treatment for food poisoning is putting fluids back in the body (the process of rehydration) through an intravenous line or by drinking. You may need to be admitted to the hospital. This depends on the severity of the dehydration, your response to therapy, and your ability to drink fluids without vomiting. Children, in particular, may need close observation.

- Antivomiting and diarrhea medications may be given.
- The doctor may also treat any fever to make you more comfortable.
- Antibiotics are rarely needed for food poisoning. In some cases, antibiotics would worsen the condition. Only a few specific causes of food poisoning are improved by using these medications. The length of illness with traveler's diarrhea (shigellae) can be decreased with antibiotics, but this specific illness usually runs its course and improves without treatment.
- With mushroom poisoning or eating foods contaminated with pesticides, aggressive treatment may include pumping the stomach (lavage) or giving medications as antidotes. These poisonings are very serious and may require intensive care in the hospital.

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For more information, read the complete article, Food Poisoning

(<http://www.emedicinehealth.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=58866>) on <http://www.emedicinehealth.com>.

WebMD Medical Reference from eMedicineHealth

Reviewed by Melissa Conrad Stöppler, MD on May 17, 2007

Last updated: May 17, 2007

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