

Diarrhea

Description

Diarrhea is an increase in the frequency and/or liquidity of bowel movements, or the passage of 3 or more loose stools per day. It results from a decrease in water absorption in the intestinal tract, increased water secretion, contaminated food, water or food surfaces; and may cause dehydration. Viruses, bacteria, toxins, stress and sometimes parasites or other intestinal disorders can cause this reaction. This type of symptom usually lasts from a few days to up to 10-14 days. For longer bouts of diarrhea, consult your medical provider immediately. Tests may be performed for severe cases to determine the cause.

Treatment

Keep hydrated with lots of low-sugar, low sodium fluids.

Eat and take fluids a few sips at a time, even if you feel nauseated. This will help shorten the duration of the diarrhea.

Follow a B.R.A.T. Diet

B.R.A.T. Diet

For the FIRST 8-12 HOURS, Clear liquids in small amounts (sips), frequently:

Gatorade
Chicken broth
Apple or pear juice
7-Up! Sprite (flat)
Gelatin
Herbal tea
Bouillon

For the NEXT 12-24 HOURS, if improved, you may add to the above:

Saltine crackers
White toast with jelly
Bananas
Plain white cooked rice
Cereal (bland, i.e. Cheerios)
Apple sauce
Canned peaches or pears
Clear soups (not cream soups) with very soft noodles

NEXT 24 HOURS, if improvement continues and your stools are formed and firm, you may add:

Boiled chicken
Lean beef (baked, broiled, or boiled)
Egg (poached or scrambled)
Cooked carrots, green peas, green beans, or baked potato (no skin)
NO broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, or beans

DO NOT EAT these foods until you have had either normal Bowel Movement's or no Bowel Movement for 24 hours:

Raw, fried, or spicy foods
Citrus fruits or juices
Bran/whole grains
Alcohol
Caffeinated beverages
Candy
Dairy

*If your stools continue to be firm, you may gradually return to your regular diet.
Milk and dairy products should be the last foods added.*

What about medications?

Any medication that slows down the emptying of the bowel may delay recovery. Hence, anti-diarrheal medications are not always prescribed. Antibiotics are used even less frequently. The dietary methods mentioned above usually alleviate symptoms and get the intestinal tract back in-line. Even diarrhea caused by a specific bacterium will usually be better treated by natural means rather than medication.

Any over-the-counter medication like Pepto-Bismol taken every two hours in 2 tablespoon doses for 8 doses may help. Note that this medication may discolor the stool a dark-brownish black.

When are special tests required?

Special tests may be ordered if:

Your history suggests contact with a specific parasite, bacteria or virus. This may occur after foreign travel, a camping trip or when friends or other members of your family become ill at the same time as you.

You have a fever of 102 degrees or more or have bloody mucous in your stool.

Your symptoms persist beyond 7-14 days without improvement, or earlier if vomiting, dehydration, persistent fever, severe abdominal pain and weight loss occur.

For More Information:

- Student Health Services 619-594-5281
- Health Promotion. 619-594-4133
- Visit Our Website at <http://shs.sdsu.edu>
- Facebook/Twitter. AZTEChalth

