

Gastroenteritis

This leaflet offers more information about gastroenteritis. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your child's care.

What is Gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis is an infection of the stomach and gut. In the UK, gastroenteritis is normally caused by a virus. If your child has gastroenteritis that is caused by a virus, antibiotics will not make them better.

There are some bacteria that can cause gastroenteritis. These are usually associated with infected food (food poisoning).

What are the signs and symptoms?

Gastroenteritis may cause;

- Diarrhoea and vomiting
- Fever
- Crampy pains in the tummy
- Dehydration - passing less urine than normal with a dry mouth or lips
- Vomiting that can last up to three days
- Diarrhoea which may continue for longer, between five to seven days after vomiting and can last up to two weeks.

Is there anything I can do to help my child?

- Encourage them to drink lots of fluid, even if they are vomiting. Drinking small amounts of fluid more often will make them less likely to vomit and help stop them getting dehydrated.
- Oral rehydration solutions have an excellent mixture of salt, water and sugar. These can be bought from most pharmacies.
- Ice lollies also provide fluid.
- In children over one year old, apple juice mixed with water (50:50 dilution) can also be used.
- Give them paracetamol if they have stomach pain or feel uncomfortable.
- Allow them to eat if they are hungry but don't worry if they don't want to eat.

You should contact your GP if your child:

- Is vomiting and can't keep any fluid down
- Is showing signs of dehydration (weeing less than normal, has less tears when they are crying, is very sleepy)
- Has blood in their poo or wee
- Has stomach pain that doesn't go away
- Is younger than three months old.

Call an ambulance or go to the Emergency Department if your child:

- **Is struggling to breathe**
- **Has cold or mottled hands and feet**
- **Is very sleepy**
- **Is pale and floppy**
- **Has diabetes.**



How to prevent another episode?

- Wash your and your child's hands with soap and water after going to the toilet or changing their nappy
- Wash hands before eating or touching food
- Keep children off school for 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea or vomiting
- Children should not use swimming pools for two weeks after gastroenteritis.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health. **Web:** www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all of our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.