When a misbehaving belly causes diarrhea and vomiting, your main focus is helping your child feel better fast. Diarrhea and vomiting can occur year-round. This survival guide is designed to give moms like you the insight you need to prepare for, help prevent, and help manage diarrhea and vomiting when these symptoms hit.

Brought to you by Pedialyte® under medical supervision
Stomach Flu Basics and Prevention

What is the “Stomach Flu?”
The stomach flu is the common term for what healthcare professionals call viral gastroenteritis. Unlike the seasonal flu, a respiratory infection caused by the influenza virus, “stomach flu” refers to several viruses that cause the intestines to become inflamed.

Signs of Stomach Flu in Children Include
- Diarrhea
- Nausea and vomiting
  *Sometimes accompanied by:
  - Stomach ache/cramps
  - Muscle aches or headaches
  - Low-grade fever
  - Sleepiness or crankiness

Help Prevent the Stomach Flu
- Make sure your kids wash their hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water
- Disinfect phones, doorknobs and toys regularly
- Discard all used tissues immediately
- Provide nutritious foods at meal times

*Helpful Hint:*
*Be aware when your children’s friends have diarrhea and vomiting, or when there’s an outbreak of stomach flu at school or daycare. Make sure the whole family is washing hands thoroughly and often, especially after sneezing and before eating.*
Get Your Home Ready Before the Stomach Flu Hits

Stomach Flu is One of the Most Common Causes of Diarrhea and Vomiting in Young Children, and because it can be brought on by several different viruses to which your child may be exposed throughout the year, it can hit at any time.

Be prepared by making sure your medicine cabinet is stocked with important essentials, including:

- Children’s fever reducer
- Thermometers
- Hand sanitizers
- An oral electrolyte solution, such as Pedialyte® (use under medical supervision)
- Diaper rash cream to treat irritated bottoms

Common Causes of Diarrhea and Vomiting in Children
While the stomach flu is a common cause of diarrhea and vomiting in children, they can also be caused by food poisoning, bacterial infection, allergies to food or milk and other more serious conditions. If your child experiences diarrhea and vomiting, it is always important to consult a pediatrician or triage nurse to best determine the cause.
Helping to Manage Your Child’s Misbehaving Belly

When a Child has Diarrhea and Vomiting, His or Her Belly is Misbehaving – preventing water and minerals from being absorbed the way they normally are. It is important to replenish these vital minerals and nutrients to help prevent dehydration.

Moms often follow their instincts to help their kids’ bellies return to normal, but myths exist about treating a child with diarrhea and vomiting, and the dehydration they can cause. For instance, a recent survey* found that nearly 50% of moms believe the best way to hydrate a child is to have them quickly drink as much fluid as possible. In addition, 63% of moms surveyed believe water, and nearly one-third (32%) believe apple juice, is appropriate to prevent dehydration during diarrhea and vomiting.

The reality is that sports drinks, sweetened sodas, and juices don’t meet medical guidelines for helping prevent dehydration due to diarrhea and vomiting in children.¹ These drinks are high in sugar, which can actually make diarrhea worse, and they don’t contain the proper amounts of the vital minerals lost during diarrhea and vomiting.

Unlike household drinks, including water, oral electrolyte solutions, such as Pedialyte®, are specially formulated to replace vital minerals and nutrients to help prevent dehydration due to diarrhea and vomiting. (use Pedialyte under medical supervision)

In addition, when hydrating a child small sips are better than gulps. Try giving them a few sips of an oral electrolyte solution every few minutes, until they’ve had the recommended amount of fluid for their age. (see next page)

Nearly All Moms Surveyed (98%) Were Unable to Correctly Identify All Signs of Dehydration*

The most common signs to watch out for are:

- Decreased urination
- Dry mouth or tongue
- Sunken eyes
- No or few tears when crying
- Overly sleepy
- Irritability (more crying, fussier than usual)

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* Survey conducted May 2011 by International Communications Research. Survey sampled 501 US mothers with a child less than 7 years of age who experienced diarrhea, vomiting or stomach flu within the last two years.

The Dos and Don’ts of Diarrhea and Vomiting

The Dos

• Give your child small sips of an oral electrolyte solution, like Pedialyte®
  – For infants under 1 year of age: Consult your doctor
  – For children 1 year of age and older: Offer Pedialyte every 1 to 4 hours. To help maintain proper hydration, the child should consume 32 to 64 fl oz per day of any Pedialyte product for as long as diarrhea continues (use Pedialyte under medical supervision)
• Keep food intake light if your child is vomiting, but make sure they remain well hydrated
• Watch your child for signs of dehydration
• Call the pediatrician if your child has diarrhea for more than 24 hours, has both diarrhea and vomiting, has a high fever, severe abdominal pain or blood in stool or vomit, or shows signs of dehydration

The Don’ts

• Do not give your child sugary foods/drinks, such as candy, juice or sodas, which can make diarrhea worse
• Do not stop your kids from eating if they have diarrhea, as long as foods aren’t too heavy
• Do not withhold fluids for fear of causing more diarrhea or vomiting
Because Antibiotics are Not Effective Against Viruses, when your child has the stomach flu, the best things to do are to keep them hydrated and make sure they are as comfortable as possible. Here are some tips to help you do that:

- Encourage bed rest with plenty of books or activities to keep your child entertained
  - Make sure your child is drinking enough, even if it means waking them up occasionally
- If not in bed, set up a comfortable spot with pillows and blankets, a favorite TV show or movie and comfort items like blankets and stuffed animals
- Have a bowl or bucket close by in case the bathroom is too far
- Provide children’s fever reducer/pain reliever for aches and pains, if your child's pediatrician says it’s alright

Helpful Hint:
Wash comfort items often to ensure they are not allowing germs to linger or be passed between family members. Also, help keep the rest of your family healthy by encouraging frequent washing of hands, disinfecting toys or shared items, like the remote control, and throwing away used tissues immediately.

Keeping Your Child Safe and Comfortable

Sing Happy Birthday Twice While Washing Hands
Keeping hands clean is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness. But do your kids know how to wash their hands correctly?

- Wet your hands with clean running water (warm or cold) and apply soap
- Rub your hands together to make a lather and scrub them well
- Continue rubbing your hands for at least 20 seconds, which is the time it takes to sing “Happy Birthday” twice
- Rinse your hands well under running water
- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry

Helpful Hint:
If your child doesn’t want to wash long enough, get silly by encouraging them to sing to the sink, medicine chest or a beloved toy or stuffed animal!