

Diarrhoea – in adults

Severity

Complexity

Duration

Description

At some point in time we will all most likely suffer from a bout of diarrhoea. Often referred to as gastro or food poisoning, it is most commonly caused by a virus, but could also be a bacteria or parasite.

Typical Symptoms

- frequent passing of loose, watery faeces
- stomach cramps or pain
- nausea and/or vomiting
- **NOTE:** Babies and small children less than 6 months who develop diarrhoea are at a much greater risk of dehydration so always warrant medical attention straight away
- **NOTE:** For the elderly diarrhoea can be a dangerous condition if not treated promptly

Seek further Medical help

In some situations diarrhoea requires more urgent medical attention. Any of the following would require a visit to your doctor:

- blood or pus in the faeces
- repeated vomiting
- inability to increase fluid intake
- reduced or absent urination
- fever (temperature greater than 38 °c).
- serious chronic medical condition, such as kidney or heart failure
- people who have recently travelled to tropical or remote areas

Treatment

The main risk of diarrhoea or vomiting comes from dehydration. Signs to watch out for that you may be dehydrated include: thirst, dry mouth, lips and tongue, dry eyes and no tears when crying, headache, a decrease in the amount of urine passed and it will be darker than normal, dizziness or light-headedness (particularly when standing).

In most cases, for an otherwise healthy adult, diarrhoea will resolve itself after a day or two, and treatment may consist of:

1 Rehydration – best achieved with a formulated electrolyte replacement (such as Gastrolyte or Hydralyte) and should be sipped slowly and frequently. The manufacturers packaging will give you a good guide for how much and how often it should be used for different age groups.

2 Anti-diarrhoea medication – over the counter products are suitable for people over 12 years of age and may be suitable for short term use.

3 Probiotics – may help to limit the symptoms of diarrhoea by helping to maintain a healthy amount of “good” bacteria in your gut.



It is also advisable to avoid fatty and spicy foods, alcohol and dairy until things have settled down.



Warning - Always read the label. Use only as directed. Incorrect use can be harmful. Contact your doctor or healthcare professional if pain or symptoms persist. Vitamin supplements may only be of assistance if dietary intake is inadequate. Health information is general in nature and you must seek appropriate medical advice for your personal condition.

MORE INFO?
Contact our Pharmacists
Richard or Sam NOW

DAVEY STREET DISCOUNT PHARMACY

Value | Convenience | Advice

a 179 Davey Street Hobart 7000
p 03 6223 8243
e advice@dspd.com.au
w www.dspd.com.au