



Toddler's Diarrhea

Simply avoiding juice or sport drinks with high fructose corn syrup may be all that's needed to help your child's diarrhea.

What is toddler's diarrhea?

Toddler's diarrhea is suspected when a healthy child between the ages of 6 months to 5 years has 3 to 10 stools per day.

This condition, also known as chronic nonspecific diarrhea of childhood, is not considered a disease.

Stools typically occur during the day, sometimes after meals, and can contain undigested food particles. Diet changes may help improve your child's symptoms. Drastic food eliminations or changes are usually not needed and may interfere with growth. Medicines are not recommended. Children with chronic diarrhea of childhood continue to gain weight and develop appropriately, and have normal appetites. Diarrhea normally improves with time as the digestive tract matures. But, there are things you can do to help relieve some of this diarrhea now.

What causes toddler's diarrhea?

The exact cause is unclear. It may be that your child's digestive tract is not fully mature and results in fast movement of food through the digestive tract. Even though most nutrients in food are being absorbed, there is not enough time for liquids to be fully absorbed. Instead, liquid passes down the gut, resulting in diarrhea.

Toddler's diarrhea triggers

There are many things that can cause or worsen diarrhea. Here is a list of different triggers and simple solutions that can help lessen diarrhea:

Triggers	What you can do you for your child
<p>Eating or drinking too much sugar or artificial sweetener Fructose and sorbitol can act as a laxative, causing diarrhea. Fructose is a type of sugar found in fruits, vegetables, honey, processed foods and beverages. Sorbitol can be found in some fruits and is an artificial sweetener.</p>	<p>Read the food label and avoid foods and drinks with sorbitol and fructose. Simply avoiding sweetened beverages, such as juice or sports drinks containing high fructose corn syrup, may be all that's needed.</p>
<p>Lactose Intolerance Some children have a hard time breaking down dairy products, which can lead to diarrhea.</p>	<p>Avoid dairy products, or take Lactaid pills.</p>

To Learn More

- Gastroenterology Clinic
206-987-2521
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- www.seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Triggers

What you can do you for your child

<p>Unchewed food Children who eat quickly, or do not chew their food well, often can have what appears to be undigested food in their stool.</p>	<p>Mash or overcook foods, and encourage your child to chew food well, or eat more slowly.</p>
<p>Drinking too much liquid Too much liquid can overwhelm the digestive tract to absorb water, resulting in diarrhea.</p>	<p>Monitor how much your child drinks. Give the recommended amount of milk for their age, and water as needed whenever they ask. Don't force lots of liquids on your child. Liquid intake varies for each child. A good sign they are getting enough liquid is when their urine is clear to slightly yellow-tinged.</p>
<p>Not enough fiber Fiber helps bulk stool, slowing down the movement of food through the digestive tract.</p>	<p>Add over-the-counter fiber supplements, such as Benefiber, Citrucel, or Metamucil.</p>
<p>Eating too much fat or greasy foods Greasy foods can be difficult to digest, or get absorbed, resulting in diarrhea.</p>	<p>Limit or avoid greasy foods - fast foods or anything fried in a pan with oil or in a deep fat cooker.</p>

What are the signs to call the doctor?

Call your healthcare provider when your child has:

- Blood in stool
- Weight loss or poor weight gain
- Chronic fever
- Severe stomach pain
- Vomiting
- Stooling accidents – stool in underpants
- Greasy or oily stools

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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