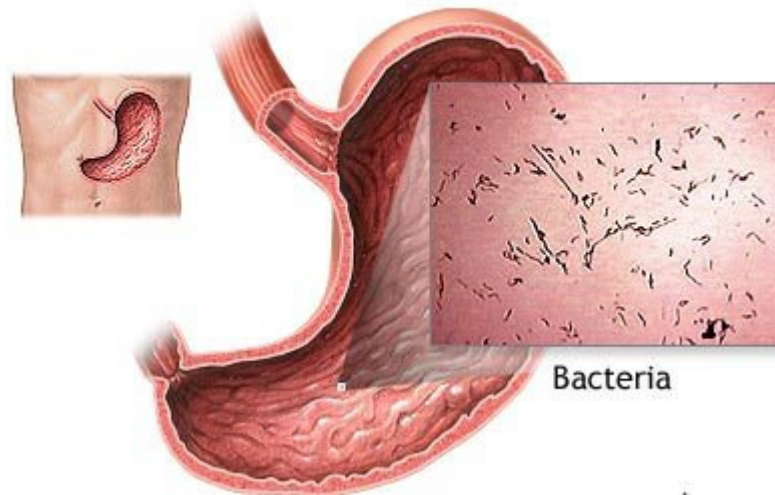


Diarrhea may be caused by bacteria or parasites found in food and water



## Medical tips about acute diarrhea

In summers and monsoons, many babies get diarrhea. It is a cause of worry for parents who do not know when to contact a doctor and when not. Sometimes unnecessary hurry is there and sometimes delay is there for seeking treatment. Through this newsletter we are trying to simplify these facts.

The disease starts with acute onset of vomiting which for first 2-3 days followed by onset of loose watery stools by 2nd & 3rd day of illness. The illness usually persists for 5-7 yrs, there may also be high grade fever with the onset of illness & persist for 1-2 days. If the child starts getting dehydrated, further clinical symptoms start appearing. These may be in the form of decreased urine output, instability, excessive thirst, decreased skin tonicity, lethargy, poor feeding and / or abdominal distention and breathing difficulties. The losses of salts including sodium and potassium also ill effects in the form of instability, altered sensorium, and inability to hold potassium losses are best replenished by giving lime water or banana.

Fever should be managed with adequate doses of antipyretics like paracetamol. If the baby has pain in the abdomen other analgesics may be necessary. Vomiting can also be controlled to an extent by giving antibiotics. The dictum is not to stop feeding the child and restart offering orally 15 minutes after the last vomiting. This will prevent most of the complications of diarrhea.

The child specialist consultation is required in case:

1. The child is not passing urine very 4-6 hours.
2. There is blood or mucus in stool and high-grade fever.
3. If the baby is lethargic, limp, irritable or having seizures.
4. If there is abdominal distention or difficulty in breathing.
5. Antibiotics are not the mainstay-managing diarrhea as 60% of the cases are viral in origin. The doctor may prescribe antibiotics at some point of the disease if he feels or the stool and blood investigations \_\_\_ to some infection.

Diarrhea in adults is a little different but the common line of management remains the same. Fluids & salts should be replenished in a similar fashion. The adult physician may give antibiotics and drugs to decrease or stop diarrhea. The preventive aspects are all similar. Avoid drinking water from suspect sources.

Have a healthy summer and rainy season.