

I recommend self-care for minor illnesses because it's



Diarrhoea (Guidance for Adults Only)

You have been given this leaflet because after a local and national public consultation on “over the counter” (OTC) medicines, available from pharmacies, we do not prescribe simple diarrhoea treatment anymore. Diarrhoea, the frequent passing of watery or loose stools, affects most people from time to time and is usually nothing to worry about. Most people can manage their symptoms well with self-care and OTC medicines if needed.

If you have a stomach bug, you could be infectious to others. You're most infectious from when the symptoms start until 2 days after they've passed. Stay off work until the symptoms have stopped for 2 days (48 hours)

Managing your condition

How can I avoid triggers/ suggested lifestyle changes

Diarrhoea is often caused by an infection. You can reduce your risk by making sure you maintain high standards of hygiene.

For example, you should:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and warm water after going to the toilet and before eating or preparing food
- Clean the toilet, including the handle and the seat, with disinfectant after each bout of diarrhoea
- Avoid sharing towels, flannels, cutlery or utensils with others
- Wash soiled clothing and bed linen separately from other clothes and at the highest temperature possible – for example, 60°C or higher for linen – after first removing any poo into the toilet
- Avoid returning to work until at least 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea

How do I treat?

Most cases of diarrhoea clear up after a few days without treatment. However, diarrhoea can lead to dehydration, so to avoid this

- **Hydration** - Drink plenty of fluids. Frequent small sips of water until symptoms stop.
- **Oral Rehydration Solutions** - Your pharmacist may suggest using if you are particularly at risk of dehydration. These replace lost fluids along with electrolytes.
- **Medicine** – there are medicines to stop diarrhoea for a few hours these are not suitable for young children
- **Eating** - You should eat solid food as soon as you feel able to. If you're breastfeeding or bottle feeding your baby and they have diarrhoea, you should try to feed them as normal.
- **Stay at home** – to prevent spreading any infection to other stay home until at least 48 hours after the last episode of diarrhoea.
- **Speak to your pharmacist** - for advice if you're not sure which type of medicine is best for you and your symptoms.

When should I seek advice?

It is advisable to seek further advice if you notice any of the following:

- You are still dehydrated despite using oral rehydration sachets
- You have bloody diarrhoea or bleeding from your bottom
- You have green or yellow vomit
- You have diarrhoea for more than 7 days or vomiting for more than 2 days

For more information

- Visit your local pharmacy for advice

Find out more about self-care at www.nhs.uk

Be self-care aware