

# Treating Diarrhea

**Diarrhea** is a common problem with many causes. Defined as bowel movements that are more frequent or more watery than usual, most episodes of diarrhea usually clear up on their own in a few days. But for more serious episodes, medical treatment is occasionally necessary.

## Treating Diarrhea

The treatment of your diarrhea depends on its cause. Diarrhea caused by infection needs to be treated differently from diarrhea caused by other factors. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions closely.

### Get Relief

To help make your recovery easier, you may want to try some of the following suggestions:

- Drink or sip liquids to avoid dehydration (excess fluid loss).

  - Clear liquids, such as water or broth, are the best choices.

  - Do not drink beverages with a lot of sugar in them, such as juices and sodas. These can make diarrhea worse.

  - Do not drink sport drinks, such as Gatorade, which don't have the right mix of water, sugar, and minerals, and can also make the symptoms worse.

  - If the thought of drinking something makes you queasy, suck on ice chips.

- As your appetite returns, you can resume your normal diet. Ask your doctor whether there are any foods you should avoid.

- Take prescribed medications (such as antibiotics for infection) as instructed by your doctor.

- Do not take any anti-diarrhea medications without asking your doctor first.

### Call Your Healthcare Provider If You Have:

- Severe pain

- High fever or bloody stool

- Symptoms of dehydration (dizziness, dry mouth and tongue, rapid pulse, dark urine)

**Note:** Antidiarrheal medications can prevent your body from ridding itself of harmful irritants (such as bacteria or viruses), so avoid these medications unless your doctor says they're okay.