Phone triage form for child with acute gastroenteritis (AGE)

Use this form when parents report either of the following for their child:

- 3 or more loose, watery stools in the past 24 hours, or
- vomiting with no diarrhea

Reasons to be seen by a physician

1. **Dehydration**
   - General appearance
     - lethargic
     - change in mental status
   - Eyes - sunken
   - Dry tongue and inside mouth (mucous membranes)
   - Absent tears
   - Capillary refill – more than 2 seconds
   - Urine output – no urine in past 8 hours or dark urine
   - Weight loss – more than 5% (if known)
2. **Younger infants, and children with chronic medical conditions**
3. **Vomiting more than 1 day with no diarrhea**
4. **Vomiting has not improved after 1 to 2 days**
5. **Unable or unwilling to take any oral fluids**
6. **Blood in the child's stool**
7. **Parental desire to be seen by physician**
8. **Healthcare provider unable to assess appropriate level of care without a visit**

Home Therapy

Hygiene and prevention of spread – use frequent handwashing or hand sanitizer

Reassurance

- Most diarrhea is caused by a virus; antibiotics will not provide any benefit for viral diarrhea
- Most children with diarrhea will improve in a few days if dehydration is prevented
- Replacing lost fluids using the following tips will help prevent dehydration

Encourage Eating and Drinking to Rehydrate and to Prevent Dehydration

- Continue nursing breastfed infants
- Continue with usual formula for formula-fed infants
  - do not dilute or substitute formulas
- Maintain current diet and fluids without any restrictions
- Use frequent, small feedings if vomiting
- Add Pedialyte, or store-bought generic rehydration solution (while continuing regular diet)
  Give smaller more frequent feedings if vomiting , or larger volume every 30 minutes for diarrhea only

If less than 5 years of age	If 5 years of age or older
5 ml every 5 minutes with syringe or	10 to 20 ml every 5 minutes or
1 ounce every 30 minutes with bottle or cup	2 to 4 ounces every 30 minutes

Other therapies

- Do not administer unnecessary medications (such as Pepto Bismol or Imodium)
- May take probiotic Culturelle, ten billion CFU dose; *(NOT Culturelle-for-Kids, one billion CFU dose)*; start immediately and take one a day for 5 to 7 days; may open capsule and mix contents with water

Expected course of symptoms

- severe diarrhea for first 1 to 3 days, then loose stools for 1 to 2 weeks; total 5 to 14 days
- often there is vomiting for the first 24 hours, vomiting gradually improves over the next 2 days

Return to school or daycare …

- only after the diarrhea has ceased

Call the doctor back if…

- child is getting worse (such as more watery diarrhea, acting more lethargic, less urine output)
- is not tolerating oral liquids due to vomiting

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