

Diarrhea

What is diarrhea?

Diarrhea is when you are having too many loose or watery stools.

What causes diarrhea?

Diarrhea is not a disease. It is a symptom of numerous conditions such as food poisoning from contaminated foods or beverages, infections, anxiety, various intestinal diseases, or side effects from a medication.

What can happen if I get diarrhea?

Frequent diarrhea can cause you to lose important nutrients. It can also cause weakness and tiredness.

What should I do if I have diarrhea?

You should **tell your doctor or nurse right away** if you notice any of the following things:

- ✓ Red blood in your stools
- ✓ Bowel movements that are blackish in color
- ✓ Fever above 100.5°F
- ✓ More than 5 watery bowel movements a day while taking medicine to stop the diarrhea.

What can I do to prevent complications from diarrhea?

- ❑ Drink six, 8-ounce glasses of water or other clear beverages daily.
- ❑ Eat light foods such as skinless chicken or turkey, broiled or baked fish, cooked cereals, eggs, white rice, toast, creamy peanut butter, potatoes, gelatin and broth.
- ❑ Eat foods with pectin, like applesauce or bananas.
- ❑ Eat foods that are high in potassium like bananas or baked potatoes.
- ❑ Eat small, frequent meals instead of 3 large meals each day.
- ❑ Stay away from foods that are irritating such as nuts, seeds, whole grain cereals, brown rice or breads, apple juice, raw fruits and vegetables, rich desserts, and fried, greasy or spicy foods.
- ❑ Avoid all milk products.
- ❑ Avoid alcohol, tobacco and caffeine.
- ❑ Keep your rectal area clean by using mild soap and water after each bowel movement. Rinse and dry your skin well. Soaking in a warm tub of water might also relieve soreness.
- ❑ Apply _____ ointment to your rectal area after each cleaning.
- ❑ Take the medications that your doctor ordered to help decrease diarrhea:

Medication _____
Dose _____
Frequency _____

Medication _____
Dose _____
Frequency _____