



## Diarrhea

### **CAUSE and DEFINITION:**

Sudden increase in the number and looseness of stools

Diarrhea means 3 or more watery or very loose stools.

- Reason: 1 or 2 loose stools can be normal with changes in diet.

### **CHARACTERISTICS:**

- Mild: 3-5 watery stools per day
- Moderate: 6-9 watery stools per day
- Severe: 10 or more watery stools per day
- The main risk of diarrhea is dehydration.
- Loose or runny stools do not cause dehydration.
- Frequent, watery stools can cause dehydration

### **INCUBATION / CONTAGION:**

Most diarrhea is caused by a virus. Bacterial infections as a cause of diarrhea are not common. Diarrhea is the body's way of getting rid of the germs.

- Virus (such as Rotavirus/Norovirus). An infection of the intestines from a virus is the most common cause.
- Bacteria (such as Salmonella). Less common cause. Diarrhea often contains streaks of blood.
- Food Poisoning. This causes rapid vomiting and diarrhea within hours after eating the bad food. It is caused by toxins from germs growing in foods left out too long. Most often, symptoms go away in less than 24 hours. It often can be treated at home without the need for medical care.

### **MODE OF TRANSMISSION & CONTROL:**

- Getting tiny particles of feces (poop) or vomit from an infected person in your mouth.
- Making close contact, like kissing, hugging, or sharing cups or eating utensils
- Touching an infected person's feces, such as changing diapers, then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth
- Touching objects and surfaces that have the virus on them, like doorknobs or toys, then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth

### **HOME MANAGEMENT:**

- Contact your child's physician for diagnosis, treatment and to determine if they need to be seen especially if your child is less than 6 months old or has a weakened immune system.
- Dehydration can be dangerous, if your child is not able to drink normally and you are worried that they may be dehydrated, contact your child's physician.
- Good hand washing hygiene sanitize frequently used surfaces

### **RETURN TO SCHOOL:**

- Diarrhea has decreased to 2 episodes or less a day.
- No fever for 24 hours without the use of medication and feels well enough to participate in school activities.