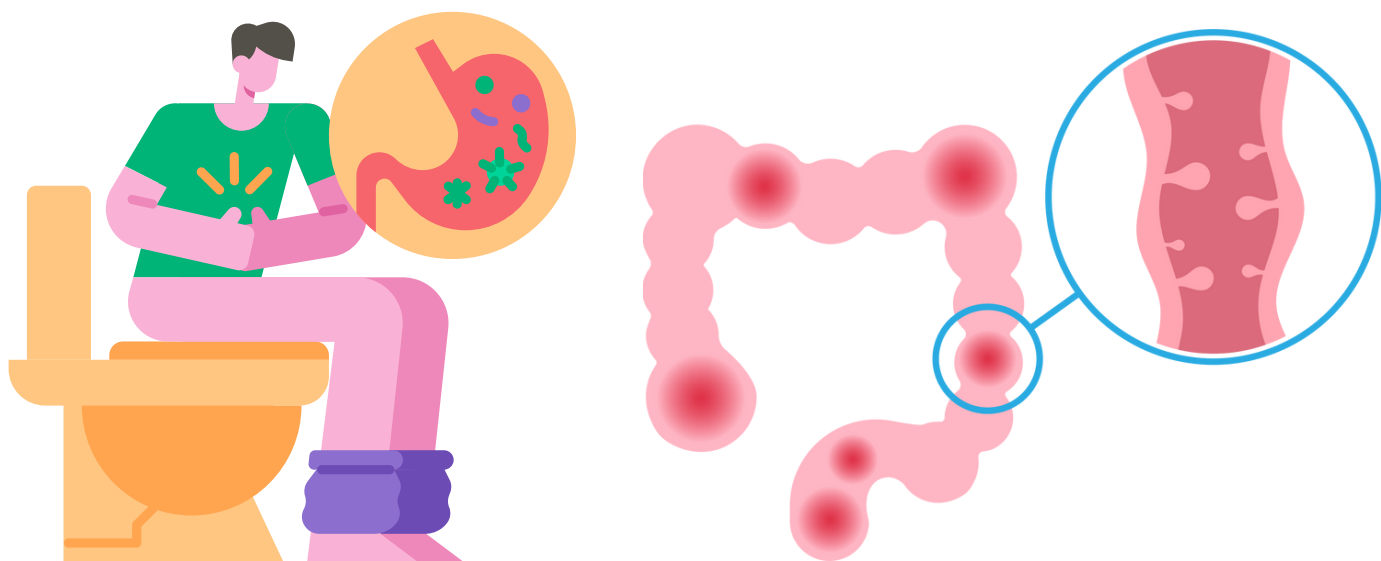


A Guide for Patients and Families

Tips on Managing Diarrhoea

Overview

Diarrhoea is the passing of loose or watery stools more frequently than usual. With persistent diarrhoea, you will lose fluids and salts from the body which can make you feel weak.



Causes:

- Intolerance to dairy milk products.
- Bacteria or viruses' infection
- Inflammatory bowel disease or other medical conditions.
- Medications such as antibiotics or some antacids.
- Ingested with contaminated food or contact with other infected persons.



Signs & Symptoms:

- Passing motion frequently than usual.
- Passing loose and watery stools.
- Stomach pain and cramps.



You may experience symptoms of dehydration if you lose too much of water from your body.

Symptoms of dehydration include:

- Dry mouth and feeling thirsty.
- Dizziness
- Lack of energy.
- Muscle cramps.
- Feeling irritable.

In serious cases of dehydration, this may cause seizures and damage to the kidneys, heart and brain.

Symptoms of serious dehydration include:

- Extreme thirst.
- Confusion
- Feeling faint.
- No urine for long period of time.
- Fast breathing and heart rate.



Ways to manage diarrhoea

Eat small meals that are easy to digest including clear soup, plain crackers, toast, boiled potato, or porridge/rice.



Drinking more water will help to replace the fluids you are losing.

Replace lost salt by consuming oral rehydration salts or isotonic drinks.



Avoid dairy products such as milk and cheese.

Try lactose-free products.

Avoid spicy, oily or fried foods which may be difficult to digest.



Avoid high fibre foods during this time such as fruits, leafy vegetables and wholegrain bread.

Avoid alcohol, caffeinated or fizzy drinks.



Hygiene

Ensure good hygiene of the skin near the anal/buttock region:

- After passing stools, gently clean the area with warm water or wet wipes, instead of toilet paper.
- Apply soothing/barrier cream if the skin is sore, broken, or painful.
- For patients requiring the use of diapers, change them regularly if dirty or soiled.



Medication

If you have been prescribed laxatives previously for constipation, stop it for time being.

Seek medical attention if you encounter the following:

- Persistent diarrhoea.
- Feeling weak or dizzy.
- Bleeding upon passing stools.