

Ivy Grove Surgery

Minor Illness Leaflet #6 – Diarrhoea and Vomiting (Gastroenteritis)

Dear

We have provided this leaflet following your recent consultation on . The NHS aims to empower all patients to self-care and we hope that this leaflet will help you to manage your condition in the future.

Name of condition

Diarrhoea and vomiting (D&V, gastroenteritis).

What it is

A gastrointestinal infection, most often caused by a virus (Rotavirus in children; Norovirus 'winter vomiting virus' in adults) and less often caused by bacteria such as campylobacter or 'food poisoning'.

Symptoms to expect

- Sudden watery diarrhoea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Slightly raised temperature
- Gripping abdominal discomfort
- Headache
- Aching limbs

Self-care

- The condition usually clears up within a week
- You should **try to avoid going to your GP as gastroenteritis can easily be spread to others**
- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration
- Take paracetamol for fever or aches and pains
- Rest at home – stay away from work or school until 48 hours after diarrhoea stops
- Wash hands regularly and do not share towels
- Taking medication for nausea or diarrhoea is not usually helpful
- Except in rare cases, antibiotics will only make matters worse

When to seek further help

- Bloody diarrhoea
- Constant vomiting, can't keep anything down, even fluids
- Severe or continuous stomach pain
- Fever (38°C or more)
- If in an at-risk group (see below)
- Dehydration (dizziness or faintness; passing little or no urine; in children this may show as being irritable, drowsy or unresponsive, pale or mottled skin, cold hands and feet)
- Other signs of serious illness in children (short of breath or rapid breathing; stiff neck; rash that does not fade when a glass is pressed over it; sunken or bulging soft spot on a baby's head)
- No improvement after 4-5 days

At-risk groups

- Kidney disease
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Immunosuppression