



# Hydration<sup>®</sup>

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## Diarrhea in Infants and Young Children

by guest author **Julius G. Goepf, M.D.**

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**D**iarrhea in infants and young children is messy and scary!

Parents often feel *out of control* when babies get diarrhea – especially if *vomiting* is part of the picture. And surprisingly, the advice that you get from doctors and health centers can be confusing and even contradictory. So *what's a worried parent to do?*

Fortunately, *there's a lot you can do* to keep your child healthy during the upcoming "diarrhea season." Start by remembering that diarrhea in infants and children is almost always *self-limited* – that is, the condition will clear itself up over just a few days, *without medication*. Keeping that fact in mind can help *reduce your*

*own stress levels!* Your job as a good parent is simply to *keep up with the child's need for good hydration, preventing water loss* from becoming a serious concern.

*Good hydration is easy* to maintain in infants and young children. You can do it with just a few simple tricks. Most importantly, lay in a stock of *oral rehydration solutions (ORS) before* your child gets ill. That way you'll have what you need, when you need it. Remember to use the *proper ORS* – *don't* use soft drinks, juices, popsicles, or other products not intended for kids with diarrhea. This is *super-important*, because most of those products contain *way too much sugar* and can actually make diarrhea (and fluid loss) worse!

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### Managing Hydration in Kids with Diarrhea – the Basics

Here are the "**Bare Essentials**" you should keep in mind as you prepare for this year's "Diarrhea Season."

- ▶ **Stock up** on oral rehydration solutions (ORS) **BEFORE** anyone in your house gets sick
- ▶ **Start offering ORS** after the very first loose bowel movement, to be sure to keep up with water losses
- ▶ **Consider using a cereal-based ORS** – they taste better and help reduce duration and severity of illness compared with standard solutions
- ▶ **If vomiting is part** of the illness, try offering just a teaspoon (5 mL) per minute for an hour – this helps limit the amount of fluid in baby's stomach and may overcome the vomiting
- ▶ **No need to change diet** or formula in most cases – just keep offering your child's regular foods or formulas, and expect intake to be down a bit
- ▶ **Keep skin healthy** in the diaper area with frequent changes, warm-water rinses, and applications of Vaseline to "waterproof" the skin
- ▶ **Always call your child's doctor if you become concerned for any reason**



## Diarrhea in Kids

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A *proper* oral rehydration solution has a special mix of *minerals* and *nutrients* that help “pump” water into your baby’s body from the intestines. Traditional oral rehydration solutions (Pedialyte and others) do a good job of replacing water lost, and it’s fine to use them. But *cereal-based solutions* have an *added advantage*: they help to *shorten the duration and severity* of diarrhea – this can bring you added peace of mind.

*If your child does develop diarrhea*, the best approach to keeping up with fluids is to start *offering some ORS* after each watery bowel movement. That way the baby’s body always has the chance to *catch up* with lost fluids.

There’s usually *no*

*need* to change the baby’s diet: keep on breastfeeding, and if you feed formula, just continue with the baby’s regular formula. It’s actually very rare that you need to switch to a soy- or other non-dairy formula. Babies sometimes don’t like the taste of regular ORS drinks, but they will drink them if their bodies require the fluid. *Cereal-based ORS* drinks *taste better*, and your baby will probably drink them just fine.

Older children should *stay on their regular diet* too – but of course expect the appetite to be a bit reduced. Offer the ORS of your choice frequently, and *avoid sugary drinks* like sodas and juices – they can make diarrhea worse. And again, the *cereal-based ORS drinks taste much better*, and most children prefer them to the other kinds.

### What about vomiting?

Vomiting is often part of

the illness – but it needn’t stop you from keeping up with fluids if you get an early start. *Wait a few minutes* after an episode of vomiting, and then *offer just a teaspoon of ORS* at a time. Even if baby wants to drink faster, it’s best to restrict the fluids to just a *teaspoon* (about 5 mL) *per minute* at first. This helps baby keep down a small volume of fluid at a time, and gives baby’s intestine a chance to *absorb the fluid* before the next dose goes in. Just a teaspoon a minute doesn’t sound like much – but that’s a full **10 ounces per hour!** If the baby still vomits after an hour of trying the “teaspoon-a-minute” approach, be sure to call or visit your doctor to make sure nothing else is going on.

*Remember to keep up*

*with skin care* as well – apply a layer of Vaseline to baby’s bottom after gently cleaning the skin with plain water and before applying the new diaper. This helps “*waterproof*” the skin and keep it intact. If a diaper rash does develop, apply your diaper cream first, and then put Vaseline on top to lock it in. And be sure to call your doctor to see if any other treatment might be needed.

*Most cases of diarrhea in infants and young children last for less than 5 days.* If you can keep up with fluids, maintain at least some of a normal diet, and keep the baby’s skin healthy, the two of you will get through it just fine!

### CeraLyte benefits:

- ▶ **Prevents and corrects dehydration:** fast and sustained electrolyte replacement with long-lasting hydration
- ▶ **Improves performance:** sustains energy through its long-chain carbohydrate and electrolyte blend
- ▶ **No cramping or nausea:** prevents cramps, vomiting, diarrhea and similar problems caused by many sports drinks

### CeraLyte hydration drinks have:

- ▶ Mixed chain rice-carbohydrate base, with NO added simple sugar.
- ▶ Low glycemic index to avert insulin spiking
- ▶ OU certified, gluten-free, fat free
- ▶ Ready to mix in concentrate or powders
- ▶ Ready to drink in “juice-box” style drink boxes with straw
- ▶ Low cost, ship direct to your home, office, camp, or athletic facility