



MERCY MEDICAL GROUP

Diarrhea

DESCRIPTION

Diarrhea is an increase in the fluid volume and frequency of stools.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- A sudden onset of loose, watery stools
- Mild abdominal tenderness
- Audible bowel sounds.

CAUSES

Infections (bacterial, viral or parasitic)

RISK FACTORS

- Drinking contaminated water
- Eating contaminated food
- Using certain medications (e.g., clindamycin, ampicillin, quinidine).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

- Avoid food irritants
- Keep foods properly refrigerated.

TREATMENT

- Fluids, sometimes with electrolyte replacement
- Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medications such as Imodium AD[®], Kaopectate[®] or Pepto-Bismol[®].

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

- Dehydration
- Bowel obstruction
- Colitis

DIET

Initially, limit the diet to sips of water and ice chips only. Next, advance the diet to clear liquids such as 7-Up[®], Sprite[®] or tea. Avoid all caffeine and alcohol. Next try a bland diet of white rice, saltines or the white meat of chicken. Finally, try a regular diet.

CONSIDER NOTIFYING YOUR PHYSICIAN IF YOU HAVE:

- Symptoms that last more than 24 to 48 hours
- Fever over 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Vomiting for over 24 hours
- Vomit that is green
- Bloody stool.

