



### **What is it?**

- Defined as more bowel movements than usual or bowel movements are more unformed and watery than usual
- May be a sign of an infection caused by a virus or bacteria or parasite
- A common problem in childhood
- Usually mild & brief

### **What other symptoms may a child with diarrhea also have?**

- Fever
- Loss of appetite
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Stomach pains
- Blood and/or mucus in stool

### **How is it spread?**

- From person to person if hands are not washed properly after using the toilet; after changing a diaper; and before preparing food.
- Spreads easily among children in daycares who have not learned to use the toilet.

### **How long is it contagious?**

- Your child should stay home from daycare until test results from bowel movements are normal (3 samples) or until the doctor has determined that the infecting germ is no longer present.

### **What can you do?**

- Wash your hands carefully after going to the toilet, after every diaper change, and before preparing & eating food.
- It is important that the child with diarrhea continues to drink enough water or other fluids to avoid dehydration.
- Contact your doctor if your child with diarrhea develops any of the following:
  - A fever
  - Refusal to drink
  - Repeated vomiting
  - Very large, watery stools
  - Several stools in a day
  - Decrease in the number of wet diapers or decrease in the amount of urine
  - Blood in bowel movement
  - Listlessness or decreased activity

- Sunken eyes
- Sunken soft spot (fontanel) on infant's head
- Consult with your child's doctor or the Algoma Public Health Parent-Child Info Line at 541-7101 (Toll Free 1-888-537-5741) if you have any questions about what to feed a child with diarrhea.

**Whom should I talk to if I have any questions?**

Communicable Disease Control, Algoma Public Health at (705) 942-4646, [www.algomapublichealth.com](http://www.algomapublichealth.com), or your health care provider.