



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?

- This can vary depending on the cause of the illness but usually people can infect others while symptoms are present and a few days after symptoms have stopped. Some people may be contagious for as long as 2 weeks after recovery.

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?

Infectious Diseases, Algoma Public Health at (705) 942-4646,
www.algomapublichealth.com, or your health care provider.