

Gastroenteritis

What is gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis is a bowel infection which causes diarrhoea and sometimes vomiting. Gastro can be caused by many different germs although the most common cause of gastro is a viral or bacterial infection. The vomiting may settle quickly, but diarrhoea can last up to ten days.

Symptoms of gastroenteritis

Symptoms may include:

- Reluctance to eat or drink
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Stomach pains
- Fever

Treatment of gastroenteritis

Children with gastroenteritis can quickly become dehydrated which may require hospitalisation and hydration through intravenous therapy (IV) and sometimes a NG tube (a tube through the nose into the stomach). It is not recommended that children receive any medications to stop the vomiting or diarrhoea.

If hospitalised

Admission

The admission process is an opportunity to discuss your child's hospital stay and any special needs they may have while in hospital or for going home.

Visiting hours

The Cabrini Paediatric Ward does not have set visiting hours.

Discharge

Your child will be discharged when your doctor is happy with their progress and condition and you are confident with caring for them at home.

Please report to the reception desk in the foyer of the hospital before leaving to finalise any administrative paperwork.

Care at home

- Often babies want to drink after they vomit. Keep breastfeeding. If bottle feeding, do not stop formula for more than 12 to 24 hours.
- Give older children one cup (150-200ml) of fluid for every big vomit or case of diarrhoea
- Offer clear fluids to children often throughout the day. As vomiting and diarrhoea subside, offer a light diet. Continue to give food if your child wants to eat. Do not stop food for more than 24 hours.
- Your child is infectious so wash your hands well with soap and warm water, particularly before feeding and after changing nappies
- Keep your child away from other children as much as possible until the diarrhoea has stopped
- Do not give medications to stop the vomiting and diarrhoea. Paracetamol or ibuprofen can be given, to assist with any discomfort or fever.

Follow-up

Please contact your doctor's rooms to organise a follow-up appointment.

When to contact your doctor

- Signs of dehydration (lethargic, decreased oral intake, decreased urine, dry lips and mouth)
- Persistent temperature of 38.5°C or higher

Questions

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the Ward using the phone number below.

Cabrini Malvern Paediatric Ward
183 Wattletree Road, Malvern VIC 3144
03 9508 1378

Cabrini Brighton Paediatric Ward
243 New Street, Brighton VIC 3186
03 9508 5690

