

Diarrhea reference chart

Diarrhea can be caused by bacteria, parasites, or viruses. This chart gives information about some of the specific causes of diarrhea. It is a supplement to the general education sheet "Diarrhea." **Fecal-oral transmission** means that the organism is swallowed from feces (bowel movement or stool) on the hands, or in food or beverages that have been contaminated by feces.

Cause	How did my child get it?	Signs	How long contagious?	Treatment?
Campylobacter (bacteria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contaminated food such as poultry, water, or unpasteurized milk fecal-oral transmission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> diarrhea; may be bloody abdominal pain fever 	Most contagious while diarrhea lasts, but may continue after diarrhea stops May return to day care when diarrhea has stopped	Helpful if given early during infection
Clostridium difficile (bacteria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fecal-oral transmission spores in environment risk increased when intestinal flora altered (such as with antibiotic therapy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> abdominal cramps diarrhea; may contain blood, mucus, or pus abdominal tenderness fever 	As long as diarrhea lasts May return to day care when diarrhea has stopped	May or may not be necessary
Cryptosporidium (parasite)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pets, farm livestock fecal-oral transmission contaminated water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> watery diarrhea abdominal pain, gas vomiting may have no signs 	Several weeks after diarrhea is gone May return to day care after diarrhea has stopped, but exclude from swimming for 2 weeks after diarrhea is gone	None proven
Escherichia coli (bacteria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fecal-oral transmission (human or animal feces) contaminated food or beverages (such as undercooked beef, or unpasteurized milk or apple cider) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> diarrhea; may be bloody abdominal pain fever 	Most contagious while diarrhea lasts, but may continue after diarrhea stops May return to day care after 2 negative stool cultures (taken at least 1 day apart)	Usually not

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Giardia (parasite)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contaminated water or food fecal-oral transmission pets (dogs, cats) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> diarrhea; may be watery, gassy, or foul-smelling abdominal pain loss of appetite may have no signs 	<p>Varies; may last for months, even after diarrhea is gone</p> <p>May return to day care after diarrhea has stopped</p>	Yes, antiparasitic
Rotavirus or Norwalk-like virus (virus)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fecal-oral transmission other transmission methods are being studied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> diarrhea vomiting low-grade fever 	<p>Usually 4 to 10 days; see education sheet "Rotavirus"</p> <p>May return to day care after fever and vomiting stop, stool is not watery or leaking out of diapers, and child is acting normally</p>	No
Salmonella (bacteria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contaminated poultry, meat, eggs, unpasteurized milk, or water contact with infected animals (turtles, iguanas, or other reptiles) fecal-oral transmission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> diarrhea; may be bloody abdominal cramps or pain fever may not have symptoms 	<p>Varies; may be months</p> <p>May return to day care after diarrhea has stopped</p>	No, except for infants younger than 3 months, or for patients with reduced immune state
Shigella (bacteria)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fecal-oral transmission contaminated water or food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> diarrhea (watery, sometimes with mucus or blood) fever abdominal cramps or pain 	<p>Usually less than 4 weeks</p> <p>May return to day care after 24 hours of antibiotic treatment and diarrhea has stopped</p>	Yes

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the clinic.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: childrensMN.org.