Diarrhea

Description
Frequent loose, watery or unformed stools.

Causes
• Infection (viral, parasitic, bacterial)
• Recent illness
• Use of laxatives
• Side effects of certain medications (such as antibiotics)
• Intolerance to certain foods (such as dairy or spicy foods)

Frequent signs and symptoms
• Abdominal pain and cramping
• Loose, watery or unformed stools
• Possible loss of bowel control
• Possible fever

General measures
• Giving a detailed history (number of stools per day, color, size or stool) will help determine the cause
• Maintain fluid intake (10-12 glasses of liquid per day) to avoid dehydration

Medication
• Check with your provider before taking any medication
• Anti-diarrhea medication may be prescribed (such as Pepto-Bismol or Imodium)

Expected outcome
• Everyone has episodes of diarrhea at one time or another

Diet
• Suck on ice chips if you are also nauseated
• Drink plenty of clear liquids (ginger ale, broth, etc.) and soft foods
• Soft, bland foods may help reduce the diarrhea (e.g.: BRAT Diet – bananas, rice, applesauce and toast)
• Avoid dairy products, spicy foods, caffeine and alcohol until symptoms resolve

Call the Telephone Care Program
1-800-455-0057 if:
• Blood is in the stool
• Dehydration develops (dry mouth, small amount of urine, excess thirst, dizziness)
• Severe pain develops in the abdomen or rectum
• Unable to take fluids by mouth
• Symptoms worsen or do not improve

Preventive measures
• Avoid undercooked or raw seafood
• Avoid foods left out for several hours (picnics, parties)
• Avoid food served by street vendors
• Avoid drinking water of questionable purity

For questions or concerns, call the Telephone Care Program
1-800-455-0057