

Diarrhoea and vomiting pathway



Clinical support tool for remote clinical assessment

This pathway is largely written for an eventual diagnosis of infectious gastroenteritis - however please be alert to the following symptoms that may raise the possibility of a more concerning diagnosis: • Fever: Temperature of > 38°C • Shortness of breath • Altered state of consciousness • Signs of meningism • Blood in stool • Bilious (green) vomit • Vomiting alone • Recent head Injury • Recent burn • Severe localised abdominal pain • Abdominal distension.

| Clinical findings | Green – low risk | Amber – intermediate risk | Red – high risk |
|-------------------|--|--|---|
| Age | | • Under 3 months | |
| Behaviour | • Content/smiles • Stays awake/awakens quickly • Strong normal crying/not crying | • No smile • Decreased activity/lethargic • Irritable | • No response • Unable to rouse or if roused does not stay awake • Clinical concerns about nature of cry (weak, high pitched or continuous) |
| Skin | • Normal skin colour • Warm extremities | | • Pale/mottled/blue • Cold extremities |
| Hydration | • Moist tongue and conjunctivae • Fontanelle normal | • Dry tongue and conjunctivae • Sunken fontanelle | |
| Urine output | • Normal | • Reduced / not passed urine in past 12 hours | • No urine for 24 hours |
| Respiratory | • Normal pattern and rate | | • Abnormal/fast breathing |
| Eyes | • Not sunken | • Sunken eyes | |
| Other | | • Additional parent/carer concerns • Age 3-6 months with temp ≥39° (102.2°F) with no clear focus of infection | • Bloody diarrhoea • Blood in vomit • Dark green (bilious) vomiting • Age 0-3 months with temp ≥38° (100.4°F) |

Green Action

[Provide diarrhoea and vomiting safety netting advice](#)
 Confirm they are comfortable with the decisions/ advice given
 Always consider safeguarding issues
 Lower threshold for referral to primary care if have long term condition ie diabetes
 Lower threshold for referral in those with increased risk of dehydration*

Amber Action

Consider video consultation
 and/or
 refer to primary care service for review

Red Action

Refer immediately to emergency care – consider whether 999 transfer or parent/taxi most appropriate based on clinical acuity etc.

*Children with increased risk of dehydration
 >3 vomits within 24 hours
 >6 episodes of diarrhoea within 24 hours
 Not tolerating fluids
 History of faltering growth