

# GASTROENTERITIS

Gastroenteritis is an inflammation (irritation) of the stomach and intestines.

## **SYMPTOMS:**

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Abdominal cramping
- Fever

## **CAUSES:**

Common causes include a viral or bacterial infection from contaminated food or water, or too much alcohol. Some medicines also may irritate your stomach.

## **CARE: Foods and Fluids**

It is very important to drink plenty of fluid in small amounts. Fluid should be clear and caffeine-free, containing sugar and electrolytes (such as Gatorade ® or other sports drinks). Restart your diet with clear liquids and add foods slowly after your nausea and vomiting have stopped. The steps below will help you do this:

### **Step 1: Clear Liquids**

Drink 1 cup of liquid every hour in small sips (jell-o, 7-Up ®, clear fruit juices, non-caffeinated tea, popsicles and broth).  
Stay away from milk, coffee, and orange juice- they are irritating to your stomach.  
Avoid alcohol.  
When you can keep clear liquids down without vomiting or having diarrhea, try a bland diet which is less irritating to your stomach.

### **Step 2: Bland Diet**

Add foods such as white bread, crackers, oatmeal, rice cereals, fish or chicken, potatoes, rice and most vegetables, except those of the cabbage family.  
No fried foods or highly spiced foods. When you can comfortably eat a bland diet, try your regular diet.

### **Step 3: Your Regular Diet**

Add foods from your regular diet that may have more fiber and spices.  
Avoid smoking, alcohol and irritating foods such as coffee and chocolate.

## **CONTACT Norton Medical Center at 508-286-5400 if:**

- Your stools become black, tarry or you notice blood in them
- You are unable to keep any fluids down for several hours
- You vomit blood

**Call 911** if you are vomiting large amounts of blood or you are dizzy when standing.