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.

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