

Diarrhoea and vomiting pathway



Clinical support tool for community pharmacists

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 $\geq 39^{\circ}$ (102.2°F) with no clear focus of infection	• Bloody diarrhoea • Blood in vomit • Dark green (bilious) vomiting • Age 0-3 months with temp $\geq 38^{\circ}$ (100.4°F)

