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Diarrhea

Very loose or liquid stools are caused by irritation of the lining of the stomach and intestines.

Self-Care Measures:

- Drink eight to ten glasses of fluid daily (water, Gatorade, Pedialyte®, Powerade); this will decrease your chances of becoming dehydrated.
- Keep track of the number of stools you have in one day and what the stools look like (soft, watery)
- Eliminate milk and milk products from your diet and minimize fresh fruits and vegetables while diarrhea persists.
- Follow a low fiber diet (white bread, bananas, eggs, mashed potatoes, meat)
- Use nonprescription medication (Imodium AD).
- Try a clear liquid diet for 24 hours to give the bowels a rest (broth, popsicles)
- Keep rectal area clean and dry; this will help decrease skin irritation. Do not use rectal suppositories.
- Applying a warm cloth to the abdominal area may alleviate cramping.

Things to Avoid:

- Foods that contain fiber and are known to be gassy, (e.g., cabbage, beans, bran, fruits, nuts, whole-grain breads, seeds, popcorn, fresh fruit and vegetables).
- Foods and drinks that contain caffeine as an ingredient such as coffee, tea and colas (may stimulate the bowel).
- Milk and milk products.
- Alcohol and tobacco.
- Fried spicy foods.

Contact your physician or nurse if you have:

- Four or more loose, watery stools in one day.
- Black, tarry stools.
- Diarrhea after a maximum of two days on the low fiber diet.
- Diarrhea after using Imodium around the clock for 24 hours
- Fever >100.5