**Diarrhea**

Diarrhea is loose, watery and more-frequent bowel movements. Usually lasts from 2 days to 2 weeks. Sometimes diarrhea can be chronic which can indicate a more serious problem.

**Frequent Signs & Symptoms**

Abdominal cramping is common with diarrhea, other symptoms may include:

* Loose, watery stools
* Fever
* Blood or mucus in the stool
* Bloating
* Nausea
* Urgent need to have a bowel movement

**Causes**

Diarrhea can be caused by:

* Viruses
* Bacteria and parasites Medications
* Lactose intolerance
* Fructose or artificial sweeteners
* Surgery

**Prevention**

Wash your hands to prevent the spread of viral diarrhea. To ensure adequate hand-washing:

* Wash frequently
* Lather with soap for at least 20 seconds
* Use hand sanitizer when washing isn't possible

**Diagnosis**

Diarrhea is usually a self-diagnosis. If symptoms persist, you will need to see your healthcare provider who will take a history and perform a physical exam. They may also order laboratory tests.

**Complications**

Diarrhea can cause dehydration. Symptoms of dehydration can include:

* Excessive thirst
* Dry mouth or skin
* Little or no urination
* Weakness, dizziness or lightheadedness
* Fatigue
* Dark-colored urine

**Treatment**

Diarrhea generally goes away in a few days without treatment. Until you feel better, rest, drink enough fluids, watch what you eat and remember to stay hydrated as dehydration is common with diarrhea.

* Drink clear liquids
	+ Water
	+ Broth
	+ Sports drinks such as Gatorade
	+ Fruit juice
* BRAT diet is suggested which includes:
* Bananas
* Rice (white)
* Applesauce
* Toast
* Some other good choices include:
* Potatoes
* Plain crackers
* Avoid foods that can make diarrhea worse, like:
* Fatty or fried foods
* Raw fruits and vegetables
* Spicy foods
* Caffeinated drinks
* Beans

Your provider may suggest an OTC medication

**When to See Your Healthcare Provider**

* Your diarrhea lasts more than two days
* You become dehydrated
* You have severe abdominal or rectal pain
* You have bloody or black stools
* You have a fever of more than 102 F (39 C)

**If symptoms worsen or do not improve, return to the clinic.**

**If you have worsening of symptoms when the Health and Wellness Center is unavailable, please follow up with the local ER or Urgent Care.**