

# Diarrhea Guidelines

## WHAT IS DIARRHEA?

Loose, watery stools that occur more frequently than usual. Defined by more than 3 or more loose stools in a 24 hour period. Diarrhea is usually caused by a virus or contaminated food. Less frequently, it can be a sign of another disorder, such as inflammatory bowel disease or irritable bowel syndrome.

## COMMON SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Frequent loose watery stool
- Abdominal pain

## CONTAGIOUS TIME PERIOD:

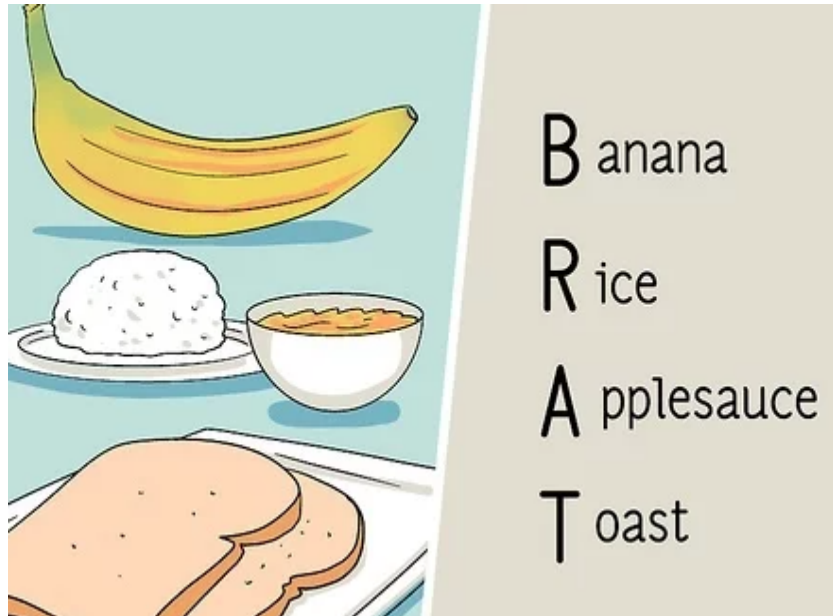
Variable depending on the cause.

## TIME FROM EXPOSURE TO SYMPTOMS:

Variable depending on the cause.

## SPREAD BY:

Usually fecal-oral.



## TREATMENT / SELF-CARE:

Replace fluids with a rehydration solution. Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medications. Follow a BRAT diet.

## ACTION AT SCHOOL:

Exclude the child from school until fever-free (99.9 F or below) for 24 hours without the use of any fever reducing medications, and until asymptomatic.

## CONSIDERATIONS AND PREVENTION MEASURES:

Good handwashing and hygiene. Avoid potentially contaminated food and beverages.

- Outbreaks of diarrhea in group settings are reportable to local health departments.