

5 Quick Tips for Surviving Stomach Flu

Guess what just went through our household… Yup, the stomach flu. Let me just tell you that it is no fun to care for a child who has the stomach flu when you have it yourself. So, how can you survive the stomach flu when you or your child have it?

- Stay hydrated! The biggest danger of the stomach flu is dehydration. So, make sure that if your little one is vomiting, he or she is swallowing at least 1 teaspoon of water every 15 minutes. I find that using a medicine dropper or a straw works better than using a spoon. Keep your child and yourself hydrated as well with watered down Chamomile tea, watered down Gatorade or flat Ginger Ale (pour it in a cup and stir a fork in it for a few moments). Just plain water can actually cause vomiting, so try to stick with these other options.

- Place at least 2 layers of towels beneath sick children at night. This way, if they don’t make it past their pillow, you won’t have to change the sheets at 3 am. It also helps to put a medium sized plastic bowl (no plastic bags!) near your child’s pillow, just in case…

- If your child has a fever (which is common with the flu), take his or her temperature every 2-3 hours. If keeping down acetaminophen or ibuprofen is next to impossible, it is time for suppositories. You can get these over the counter or call the doctor for a prescription. Stay on top of the dosage for at least 2 days after the fever breaks to avoid febrile seizures (if your child is prone to them).

- Take a disinfectant to all doorknobs, stairway railings, faucets and places where hands touch to decrease the spread of the virus. Keep your hand-washing rule in tact with anyone who has vomited, is eating or has entered the home washing their hands immediately!

- Get some rest! One of the best ways to get through the stomach flu is for everyone to get some rest. Don’t feel guilty about utilizing the TV, especially if it means that you and your little ones are still for a moment.

Call the doctor if anyone with flu symptoms shows signs of dehydration: sunken eyes, dry lips and mouth, blood in vomit, decreased urination (less than every 6 hours), crying without tears, excessive thirst, cool, discolored hands or feet, lethargy or excessive sleepiness. If your child is showing signs of dehydration and you cannot reach the doctor, head to the emergency room as an IV will most likely be recommended to rehydrate your child.

Keep in mind that as awful as the stomach flu is, it usually will not last much longer than 3 days. Hang in there and take care!