

## Gastroenteritis with Bloody Diarrhoea

Gastroenteritis is the most common cause of bloody diarrhoea in children and adults.

### What is gastroenteritis?

It is an infection of the gastrointestinal tract (the gut) causing diarrhoea and sometimes vomiting. Some of these infections can cause bloody diarrhoea.

### What is the duration of gastroenteritis with bloody diarrhoea?

Gastroenteritis with bloody diarrhoea usually resolves without specific treatment within 3-8 days, but symptoms may persist for up to 3 weeks.

### What tests will my child have?

A stool sample is sent to the lab to see which microorganism has caused the infection. The test (called a stool culture) takes a few days to run.

### What should we do at home?

- Encouraging your child to drink plenty of fluids is the most important aspect of treatment. Small frequent amounts of fluid are essential to prevent dehydration.
- Good, frequent hand washing is necessary to prevent spread of the infection among family members.

### Will my child need specific treatment?

- Antibiotics are not usually prescribed except in severe cases or in children with a compromised immune system.
- You may receive a phone call from the emergency department if the stool sample reveals certain organisms that require further assessment.

### When should I seek medical attention?

If your child develops any of the following symptoms over the next 3 weeks, please bring them back to the emergency department for medical assessment.

- new bleeding from the nose, mouth, or blood in the urine
- unexplained bruising
- a rash that does not disappear if you press a glass onto it
- severe abdominal pain
- severe headache
- not passing urine for 12 hours
- irritability
- puffiness of the face or ankles
- persistent of the blood in the stool for 3 weeks