

# Diarrhoea and vomiting pathway



## Clinical support tool for remote clinical assessment

This pathway is largely written for an eventual diagnosis of infectious gastroenteritis - however please be alert to the following symptoms that may raise the possibility of a more concerning diagnosis: • Fever: Temperature of > 38°C • Shortness of breath • Altered state of consciousness • Signs of meningism • Blood in stool • Bilious (green) vomit • Vomiting alone • Recent head injury • Recent burn • Severe localised abdominal pain • Abdominal distension.

Clinical findings	Green – low risk	Amber – intermediate risk	Red – high risk
Age		• Under 3 months	
Behaviour	• Content/smiles • Stays awake/awakens quickly • Strong normal crying/not crying	• No smile • Decreased activity/lethargic • Irritable	• No response • Unable to rouse or if roused does not stay awake • Clinical concerns about nature of cry (weak, high pitched or continuous)
Skin	• Normal skin colour • Warm extremities		• Pale/mottled/blue • Cold extremities
Hydration	• Moist tongue and conjunctivae • Fontanelle normal	• Dry tongue and conjunctivae • Sunken fontanelle	
Urine output	• Normal	• Reduced / not passed urine in past 12 hours	• No urine for 24 hours
Respiratory	• Normal pattern and rate		• Abnormal/fast breathing
Eyes	• Not sunken	• Sunken eyes	
Other		• Additional parent/carer concerns • Age 3-6 months with temp $\geq 39^{\circ}$ (102.2°F) with no clear focus of infection	• Bloody diarrhoea • Blood in vomit • Dark green (bilious) vomiting • Age 0-3 months with temp $\geq 38^{\circ}$ (100.4°F)

**Green Action**

[Provide diarrhoea and vomiting safety netting advice](#)  
 Confirm they are comfortable with the decisions/ advice given  
 Always consider safeguarding issues  
 Lower threshold for referral to primary care if have long term condition ie diabetes  
 Lower threshold for referral in those with increased risk of dehydration\*

**Amber Action**

Consider video consultation  
 and/or  
 refer to primary care service for review

**Red Action**

Refer immediately to emergency care – consider whether 999 transfer or parent/taxi most appropriate based on clinical acuity etc.

\*Children with increased risk of dehydration  
 >3 vomits within 24 hours  
 >6 episodes of diarrhoea within 24 hours  
 Not tolerating fluids  
 History of faltering growth