

T Kids' Meal TIMES S

Issue No. 5

When Your Child Is Sick

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When your child gets sick, it will affect how he or she eats. Different foods may need to be offered until your child feels better. Or, some foods may need to be avoided because they make a sick child feel worse.

This issue covers how to feed a sick child. Do

you starve a cold and feed a fever, or is it the other way around?

There are suggestions for feeding children with common childhood illnesses. If you have questions about caring for your child when sick, call your doctor.



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What to Feed a Sick Child

Here are some suggestions when feeding your sick child.

These ideas may help but if you have questions, call your doctor.

Colds

- **Your child may not want to eat with a cold.** Don't force him or her to eat if not hungry.
- **Children with colds need to drink as many fluids as possible.** Water and diluted fruit juices are good choices.
- **Children like light, soothing foods when they are sick.** Good food choices include yogurt, applesauce, soup, or toast. It is okay to offer milk, too.

Fever

- **Some children with a fever won't be hungry.** Don't force your child to eat.

- **Be sure your child drinks plenty of water and fruit juice.** A child's body loses more water when there is a fever.
- **Call the doctor if your child's fever is high, if your child is not urinating as much as normal, or if your child becomes overly sleepy.**

Vomiting

- **When your child is vomiting, don't give anything to eat or drink** until the stomach settles down.
- **One hour after vomiting, offer a few sips of clear liquid.**
- **Over the next couple of hours, give more fluid if it doesn't upset the stomach.** After that, foods that appeal to your child's appetite are okay.

Diarrhea

The biggest concern in feeding a child with diarrhea is dehydration. Dehydration means the body fluids are too low.

- **If the child has diarrhea more than once every three hours, an oral rehydration solution is recommended.** This can be purchased from the drug store or some grocery stores. It is a good idea to have one of these products on hand for times when your child has diarrhea in the night.

Examples of oral hydration solutions are:

- Pedialyte
- Infalyte
- Naturalyte
- Rehydralyte
- Store brands (often cheaper)

The oral rehydration solutions replace water

and certain minerals in the body. Offer the child $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 cup of the solution every hour for twenty-four hours or until the diarrhea stops.

- **Call your doctor if your child has severe diarrhea or it doesn't improve within twenty-four hours.**
- **Your child should begin eating again as soon as he or she can.** This may cause more diarrhea, but food will help your child get well faster. Offer healthful foods and avoid milk, apple juice, and foods high in salt or sugar for a day or two.

Activities

Help your child as he or she gets well.

- **Tell your child about foods you learned to eat when you were sick as a child.** Discuss how these foods still have special meanings for you as an adult.
- **Keep a “special” cup or glass for your child to use when sick.** One that is brightly colored or has a favorite face on it may be soothing to your child and make drinking liquids fun.

Sore Throats and Coughs

- **Foods that are warm or cold are very soothing** when a child has a sore throat.
- **Some children like warm soups,** warm apple juice, or hot chocolate.
- **Other children like cold foods** such as fruit juice, popsicles, milkshakes, or frozen yogurt. Fruit slushes, made from fruit juice or fresh fruit blended with crushed ice, are also good.
- **If your child has a sore throat for more than twenty-four to forty-eight hours,** call your doctor. This is especially important if your child has a fever or has trouble swallowing.

A Recipe You Can Make for Your Child

Warm Lemonade “Tea”

Lemonade mix, frozen concentrate, or real lemons and sugar
Fresh or frozen strawberries or orange slices (optional)

1. Make a batch of lemonade.
2. Heat some in a microwave-safe coffee mug in the microwave or in a pan on the stove. Stir and then test the temperature before serving.
3. If your child prefers, add some crushed strawberries or orange slices for color and extra flavor.

This is a soothing drink for a child with a cold or sore throat.



Books to Read with Your Child

Check for these at the library or bookstore:

Big Bird Goes to the Doctor.
Tish Sommers and Tom Cooke. New York: CTW/Golden Books, 1986.

Walt Disney's Happy Healthy Pooh Book. Mary Carey. New York: Golden Books/Western Publishing, 1977.

Sick-in-Bed Birthday Book.
Linda Tyler. New York: Penguin USA, 1988.

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