

# Diarrhea

## DESCRIPTION

Diarrhea occurs when the stool is too quickly eliminated from the body and there is insufficient time for water to be absorbed back into the body. The result is that the stool retains water and becomes runny.

## CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

It is important to understand that diarrhea is not, in itself, a disease; it is a symptom. In the case of chronic diarrhea (lasting more than three days), finding the underlying cause is essential to determining the proper course of treatment. There are many possible causes of diarrhea, including tainted food or beverages, bacterial infection, lactose intolerance, parasites, dysbiosis, short bowel syndrome, diverticular disease, drugs, laxative overuse, fungal infection, inflammatory bowel disease, viral infection, and food allergies.

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

Liquid stool lasting more than three days is considered chronic diarrhea. Medical intervention may be necessary if the diarrhea is severe, bloody, or accompanied by:

- High fever
- Rectal pain
- Significant abdominal pain
- Signs of dehydration (dry mouth, excessive thirst, exhaustion)

## STEPS TO ADDRESS DIARRHEA

1. **REPLACE ELECTROLYTES AND LIQUID.** Drink plenty of water, herbal tea, fruit juices and meat and vegetable broth to replace the electrolytes and liquid lost during chronic diarrhea. Special electrolyte replacement drinks are also recommended.
2. **AVOID DAIRY PRODUCTS.** Because the small intestine may be temporarily deficient in lactose (the enzyme needed to digest milk sugar), avoid dairy products while addressing diarrhea.
3. **GET TESTED.** Consider a food sensitivity test to determine if the cause of diarrhea may be food-related.
4. **IDENTIFY AND TREAT.** It is important to identify and treat any underlying causes of chronic diarrhea. These may include parasites or infection.
5. **INCREASE FIBER INTAKE.** Adding more fiber to the diet will help bulk up a watery stool.
6. **REPLACE INTESTINAL FLORA.** Maintain a healthy bacterial balance in the digestive tract with a daily probiotic supplement that includes Acidophilus and Bifidus.