DIARRHEA

1. **Definition:** Diarrhea is a watery stool that occurs more than four times per day. Diarrhea is usually caused by viral infections of the intestines. The diarrhea often lasts for several days to a week. Toddlers may go through a period of chronic loose stools and this may be normal.
2. Adequate fluid intake is essential to prevent dehydration. It is important to provide more fluid than the child is losing through diarrhea. Signs of adequate hydration include a normal or near normal urine output, a moist mouth, and an alert child who is reasonably active.
3. **Treatment for older children:** Provide a regular diet with a few simple changes. Avoid apple, pear, or prune juices which can loosen stools. If diarrhea is prolonged, avoid milk products, which may become difficult to digest. Provide adequate fluids. But for the most part, feed your child a normal diet. The goal is not to stop the diarrhea, but to provide proper nutrition to heal the intestines.
4. **Treatment for infants:**
    - **a.** Breastfeeding: Continue breastfeeding at more frequent intervals. Supplement with Pedialyte/Infalyte by bottle or syringe if urine output decreases.
    - **b.** If formula feeding: Increase the amount of formula, and/or supplement with Pedialyte/Infalyte to make up for the additional fluid losses. For prolonged diarrhea, try switching to a lactose free formula (soy or Lacto-Free formula) or Isomil DF (diarrhea formula with extra fiber).
5. If the skin near the baby's anus is getting sore, wash gently and then protect it with Vaseline, A&D, Desitin or Balmex.
6. **Call our office during regular hours if:**
    - **a.** The child is less than six months old;
    - **b.** The diarrhea is severe;
    - **c.** Mild diarrhea lasts for over one week;
    - **d.** Decrease in the amount of urine and wet diapers;
    - **e.** Dry tongue and mouth rather than their usual moist texture;
    - **f.** No tears when he/she cries;
    - **g.** Any blood, pus or mucus in the diarrhea
    - **h.** For any other symptoms that concerns you
7. Call our office urgently if:
    - **a.** There is fast of heavy breathing;
    - **b.** Any abdominal pain for over two hours.
    - **c.** The baby becomes lethargic.