Season Intro and Episode Overview

Hi, welcome to season three of the baby manual podcast, the holistic mama's handbook. This season will go through alternative and supportive care to help you take care of your little one when they're sick, but too young to take most medicines.

I'm your host, a pediatrician and mom, and the author of The Baby Manual and The Holistic Mama's Handbook, Dr. Carol Keim. Hello and welcome to this week's episode of the Baby Manual Podcast.

Today we're going to talk all about vomiting and diarrhea. Now before I get into vomiting, I need to mention two red flags around a month of age. That can be a sign of pyloric stenosis.

Pyloric stenosis is something that is more common in boy babies and in first babies. It can run in families, but it can happen in any baby. So if your baby is around four to six weeks old, you want to keep an eye out for spit ups that are getting progressively worse and more forceful.

Pyloric Stenosis Warning Signs

And when I say worse, I mean larger volumes and starting to shoot farther and farther away. Projectile vomiting, we typically reserve for vomiting that shoots more than two feet away or goes really far and has some force behind it.

Not just the kind of happy spinning that we see in regular spit ups, but really involves the abdominal muscles. And the other later sign of pyloric stenosis is that the contents that come out start to get green.

So yellow is just from stomach acid, but green is bile. And if you ever see bile in your child's throw up, it can be a sign a blockage somewhere along the intestines.

Green vomiting at any age is a red flag and needs to be worked up right away. but around a month of age can be a sign of pyloric stenosis. So the pilaris is the little bit of muscle between the stomach and the first part of the intestines.

And in some babies, it grows too big, and when it goes too, big the lining inside, like the tube that goes through the middle of, the Pilarus into the intestine gets narrower.

As it gets progressively narrower, The vomiting gets worse and worse. Over time, your baby can get dehydrated, and doesn't get enough calories and can even start to lose weight.

Pyloric stenosis is treated with a really small surgery where they just go in, they make a small incision in the abdomen about an inch long and cut into the muscle in pylorus and that treats it and makes it go away completely.

And that is the only treatment for it. So around a month of age, if your baby's having progressively worsening spit ups and vomiting, that's a reason to see your doctor.

So the rest of this, we're going to talk about actual vomiting, like when your baby or your child is sick with an infection. And typically vomiting and diarrhea are caused by viral infections.

Vomiting alone, though, can also be a red flag in older children and can be caused, by lots of other things besides infections, so if your, child, is only vomiting.

and doesn't have other symptoms or their only other, symptoms are maybe like fever. but nothing else or headache with it or something like that, then that's another reason to see your doctor.

Because all kinds of things can cause vomiting, like pneumonia can caused vomiting because the lungs are close to the stomach and that can kind of cause local irritation there and vomiting.

Vomiting Causes and When to Seek Care

Urinary tract infection can can a cause a child to vomit. Head injuries and concussions can causes vomiting so things outside of the stomac can caus vomiting alone.

So vomiting is a red flag, vomiting with diarrhea, is more likely to be an infection. And so that's more what we're talking about today. So vomiting is any kind of forceful expulsion of the stomach contents.

In a Western standpoint, we don't really treat vomiting from infections because when you give children medicines to make them stop throwing up, and also the same goes for diarrhea, which we'll get to in a minute, but it keeps the infection in their body longer and it could potentially spread into their bloodstream or make the sicker or just make have the viral infection for longer if you're keeping the stuff in there.

So usually when kids are throwing up, we say that there's something that needs to be coming out. And so when a child is vomiting, We sort of allow them to keep vomiting because that will make the infection go away quicker.

What we do focus on though is making sure they don't get dehydrated because they're losing liquids when they throw up. So you want to give small sips of liquid at a time, things like water, broth, chicken broth or veggie broth.

Tea, watered down juice that's pretty watery, like at least half water and half juice or sometimes more water than juice. And you can also use something called oral rehydration solution for kids that have a lot of vomiting and diarrhea.

And, you Google how to make oral rehidration solutions, but it's basically water with sugar and salt in it. It doesn't taste very good, so I typically recommend adding just a tiny bit of juice into the oral reiteration solution, or even like a powdered drink mix, something for flavor.

You can use jello powder or something like that to add some flavor into that so that it tastes a little bit better. You wanna do small sips at a time because for a child that's vomiting, if you give them as much water as they want to drink or as liquid to as drink as want, a lot of times they'll drink it fast and then just from their stomach expanding quickly like that, they throw up again.

So small amounts are great. One way to kind of sneak fluids in in a slow way is to give them popsicles, because popsicle melts slowly and get that little bit of fluid in.

And you can make your own popsicles, too, if you have a popsical mold out of things like tea and broth and watered down juice and all that stuff.

Hydration and Feeding During Vomiting

We do also have some kind commercial rehydration things that a lot of parents use, like Pedialyte and Gatorade. Those are OK options as well. But typically kids don't really need that.

They just need something with sugar and salt in it. So really any of these other options are fine as well. Also giving them smaller meals and bland foods can help with vomiting.

For babies that are exclusively breastfed or bottle fed and vomiting, so in the first six months of life, you should talk to your doctor because they can get dehydrated and really all you can give them is that breast milk or formula to keep them hydrated.

And so you wanna make sure they're not losing too many electrolytes with that and see if there might be something else going on. But over six month of age, it's okay to be giving water and other fluids and also, If your child doesn't

feel like eating, you don't have to force them to eat when they're sick.

It's really okay for children to go several days without any food at all, as long as they are drinking and have some sugar and salt in there. And also, even just like a single cracker is fine and sometimes can help settle the stomach a little bit.

But yeah, if your children doesn' t want to e, don' get too worried. Even if they lose a lit weight, they always bounce right back after they get better.

So just keep pushing those fluids while they'r sick From an acupuncture standpoint, both acupuncture and Chinese herbs can help with vomiting. So acipuncture, there are several points.

There's also acu-pressure points that you can find. One of the ones is along the inside of your wrist between those tendons and you try pressing on that point.

And then there's a pressure point in the meaty point part between the thumb and the first finger, and you can try rubbing that point as well if your child is feeling nauseous.

And those can sometimes help alone, but acupuncture, they have points along there and also along those channels to help with the nausea and vomiting. Then Chinese herbs, too.

So either herbs that are given as tinctures or herbs made into compresses to put on the abdomen could potentially help Chiropractic care doesn't specifically treat vomiting or diarrhea, but it can help with overall wellness and inflammation.

So you can call your chiropractor to see what they recommend, But typically they don't recommend adjusting while your child is sick and vomiting. It's not as helpful as it is for other conditions.

From a nutrition supplement standpoint, ginger helps to settle the stomach. If your child's eating foods, they can have things like ginger candies or ginger tea or Ginger Ale, Ginger Beer, outside the US it's called, and that can help settle their stomach a little bit.

Actually, even soda can helps settle this stomach, I don't know if it's from like the bubbles or from cola, like Coca Cola or Pepsi kind of products. They used to, back in the day, just give cola syrup to children who were nauseous and vomiting.

Sodas can sometimes help your child to feel better when they're vomiting and this is one of the few times that I would actually recommend that. The ones that have sugar in them are actually better than the diet ones, that has sugar substitutes in terms of settling the stomach.

And also just overall health standpoint. Remember bland foods, things like white starchy foods can help a little to settle the stomache.

Natural Remedies for Nausea and Vomiting

So like toast, the brat diet, bananas, rice, applesauce, toast. But also crackers, bread, pasta, just plain foods. Can help with that. And then for viral infections, supplements and vitamins like vitamin C, vitamin D, zinc, echinacea, and elderberry, they all can help to boost the immune system and help your child to heal faster.

And just a reminder that I do have an affiliate link in my show notes for this. And if you go and click on that, you can get 10% off of vitamins and then I get the company that sells the vitamins will pay me a small commission from that.

So I, I did get a kickback. If you do do that but keep in mind, any, sort of, vitamins are typically good. Just make sure you have a good company. The ones that are in the link, it links to several different companies of vitamin.

They don't have any ties to anyone in particular in those. From a homeopathic standpoint, the only one that I found potentially helpful is Antimonium Crudum and Nux Vomica also.

And remember that homeopathy is not fully supported by Western science, but if you want to try one of these remedies for younger children, you can dissolve the pellets into water and give them small amounts of that water.

For children that are old enough to eat, they can have those sugar pellet and put them under their tongue and try those. From an aromatherapy standpoint, I actually saw some really good research showing that diffused oils can help with nausea and vomiting.

And I was really surprised about that. But also you can put these oils into a carrier oil. You want to dilute them into something like a jojoba oil or almond oil, olive oil coconut oil anything like that, and you rub it onto the abdomen or you put the diluted oils onto a wet washcloth that's warm and put that on the belly and sometimes that can help settle it.

So the best oils for vomiting are ginger, peppermint, lavender, fennel seed, lemon, and rose. And any of those or a combination of these could be helpful when your child is feeling nauseous and vomiting.

from a diarrhea standpoint. So diarrhea is something that there's actually some argument in the medical community about like how to fully define it. But basically it's more frequent stools that are looser and just more frequently from baseline.

There's no absolute number of poops per day that counts as diarrhea or volume or anything like that. When you notice that your child's poop is getting a lot looser, and if they're in diapers, if it's so watery that it is soaking into the diaper, that is diarrhea.

Remember that normal baby poop, is very loose and sometimes even mucousy and yellow or green, but it typically sits on top of the diaper lining and doesn't soak all the way in.

So I have a lotta parents asking me when their baby's around, two to four weeks old when they're getting those like really early on yellow CD stools like does my baby have diarrhea is this diarrhea and typically it's not.

Now if you ever see blood in your baby's poop that is a red flag and so you should bring that into the doctor and bring your to show them it can be helpful to bring that in as well, or at the very least take a picture of it and show the doctor.

There are a lot of things that mimic blood in the diaper, and I have a list of those in The Baby Manual, but if you're not sure, you can always bring it in and your doctor can do a really quick test to see if it's blood or not.

So from a Western standpoint, again, we don't really give diarrhea medicines to children because it makes them worse. And when there's blood, especially, if we think it's from an infection, it is more likely to be caused by a bacterial infection.

Understanding Diarrhea and Red Flags

Those can be very dangerous if you give a diarrhea medicine because those can make that bacteria go into the bloodstream. We'd sometimes recommend the brat diet, the bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast because those are binding foods, especially rice.

For younger children or for babies that are still eating baby foods you can do rice cereal and that tends to bind things up. But remember that the Brat diet doesn't have a lot of nutrition in it.

So it's really only meant to be used for about 24 hours and then after that you want to start adding a variety of foods back in. especially things that are low bulk forming like broth, like chicken broth or veggie broth because then your child can absorb the nutrients from it but it's not making a lot of bulk in the intestines and so it is not as much

diarrhea.

The BRAT diet doesn't actually fight the diarrhea, it really just makes it a little easier for parents to clean up. So it isn't making them get better any faster, its just kind of helping symptomatically.

Bland foods can help a little bit too. You wanna be avoiding things like spicy foods. Juice is something that can cause more diarrhea because of all the sugar in it and the pectin.

So if you're giving your child juice while they have diarrhea, you do wanna keep them hydrated, but you should dilute that juice down with at least three quarters water to one quarter juice if your going to give juices.

Also, some children after diarrhea or during the diarrhea infection and then continuing for a couple weeks afterwards will have a temporary lactose intolerance.

And so if your child is having some worsening symptoms or they're just having this diarrhea that's just not going away, try limiting dairy. So for babies less than six months of age, you can't really do this.

But when they are over six-months-old, tried to limit how much dairy they're consuming because that can be making the diarrhea a lot worse. And remember that foods that are made out of dairy that is sweeter tasting have more lactose in them.

So things like hard cheese is actually of less lactase, but like butter, ice cream, yogurt, sour cream they have a little bit more of lactosed relatively.

Yogurt is sort of a double edged sword because it does have probiotics in it which help the baby to digest that. that lactose too. So sometimes we'll still recommend plain yogurt even if they're having diarrhea, but if you feel like the dairy is making them worse, then you may want to cut that or hold it while they are having a diarrhea.

From an acupuncture standpoint, both acupuncture and Chinese herbs can help with diarrhea symptoms, especially if it's prolonged or frequent or your child is having kind of irritable bowel symptoms where they just get bouts of diarrhea all the time.

Acupunctur is really great for that. From a chiropractic standpoint, again, they don't specifically treat diarrhea, but it does help with overall wellness and inflammation.

Treating Diarrhea and Supporting Recovery

And so that may help. Chiropractic is actually a lot better for treating constipation. So most kids will poop after adjustments. Yeah, I wouldn't necessarily bring them in when they're having diarrhea.

But you can always call your pediatric chiopractor and see what they suggest. From a nutrition and supplement standpoint, so for babies that are less than six months old and are breastfeeding, if they are having regular yellow CD stools and then they start having more watery stoles that turning green, That can sometimes be a sign that they're getting too much foremilk and not enough hind milk.

And so what you can do to combat that is do block feeding where you nurse them twice on the same breast and then twice, on other breast. Or if you're pumping, you mix the pumped milk in the fridge in a jar that's sealed and throughout the day you are getting overall for milk and hind milk mixed together that way.

The formilk has more sugar in it and so that's the formilk is when they very first start nursing. So the first milk that comes out has relatively more suger and then as the nursing session goes on towards the end of it there's more fat in.

And so nursing twice on that same side kind of allows that hindmil that was coming in to keep coming in so that they're not getting just the four milk from both sides.

And then I would pump the other side if you're block feeding just so you don't get a buildup of milk on that side and potential mastitis. Other things that can help from a nutrition standpoint, so again avoiding dairy and sugar, avoiding fruit, and fruit juices, give probiotics.

Probiotics can help to replenish that good gut bacteria and can helps with digestion as well and make diarrhea go away faster. And then for viral infections you can use those immune boosting supplements like vitamin C, vitamin D, zinc, echinacea, and elderberry all to help boost the immune system and to make infections go way faster Homeopathically, there are a couple of remedies that are suggested for diarrhea.

One is China Fischianalis, another is arsenicum album, and then podophyllum peltatum. And those can all potentially help with diarrhea, but again, Western science doesn't fully support homeopathy.

So you can try these, they may or may not be helpful. But they shouldn't at least be harmful. Do you make sure that if you are doing homeopathic remedies or getting them from a good source though?

Because there have been some preparations of some homeopathy things like those teething tablets a few years back that were recalled because there were detectable amounts of Belladonna in those ones.

So anyways, just make that you're getting good homeapathy remedies if are going to try them because they could potentially be dangerous to children, although that is rare.

From an aromatherapy standpoint, things that help with diarrhea are oils that are either placed in a diffuser or put into a carrier oil and rubbed onto the abdomen in clockwise direction.

And the oils most commonly suggested for diarrhea, are anise, fennel, peppermint, coriander, lemon balm, cardamom, and cinnamon. Remember, all of these are going to be in the show notes as well and in The Holistic Mama's Handbook, so you don't need to take notes while you're listening to this.

Just a reminder that children should not consume essential oils. So if they are having vomiting or diarrhea, you do not want to give any of the oils by mouth because essential oil are very concentrated and could potentially be toxic to children.

I hope you enjoyed today's episode. Sorry to talk about all the gross stuff in one. Next week we're going to be talking about constipation and UTIs. There's more information like this in the Holistic Mama's Handbook, which you can order on Amazon.

Wrap-Up and Next Episode Preview

It should be live at this point and it is available all around the world on all of the Amazon marketplaces and on Kindle as well. And I also have more information about vomiting and diarrhea and reflux and spit ups and all this stuff and pylorectinosis and something called discoordinate stooling and All these things in the baby manual, which is also available on Amazon And there's a link for that in this show notes as well.

Have a wonderful day and thank you for listening Thank you for listening to the Baby Manual Podcast. Please hit that subscribe button below so you don't miss the new episodes as they come out.

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