Nausea, Vomiting, and Diarrhea

WHAT IS IT?
The symptoms of nausea, vomiting and diarrhea, which is often called “the stomach flu” or gastroenteritis, are often caused by a virus in the intestines. This is different from influenza (the flu), which is a respiratory infection.

WHAT CAUSES IT?
It is usually caused by a coming in contact with a sick person or ingesting contaminated food or water. Symptoms can vary and tend to appear 1-3 days after you are infected. Most symptoms resolve within 48-72 hours, however, some symptoms can linger for up to 10 days. There is no “cure”, so managing symptoms while your body heals is best.

SYMPTOMS
- Loose and watery stool
- Nausea, vomiting or both
- Abdominal cramping
- Generalized body aches
- Headache

WHEN TO SEEK MEDICAL CARE:
- Unable to keep clear liquids down for >24 hours.
- Vomiting for more than 2 days.
- Vomiting blood or have bloody diarrhea.
- Fever > 101 F.
- Signs of dehydration: excessive thirst, dizziness, severe weakness, dark yellow or little to no urine.

SELF CARE TIPS
- Don’t try to eat or drink anything while you are vomiting frequently.
- When your stomach begins to settle, try SIPS of clear liquids only, limit to 8 ounces per hour initially. If you are doing well with sips, try to start drinking larger amounts slowly.
- Examples of clear liquids are: ice, water, soft drinks, tea, Kool-Aid, ice popsicles, sports drinks, Jell-O.
- When you are tolerating fluids well and have not had any vomiting for at least 8 hrs. You can try the BRAT diet: Bananas, Rice, Applesauce and Toast. You can also try plain bagels, saltine crackers and baked potatoes. No cream soups, meats, vegetables or salads.
- When you are doing well on the BRAT diet for at least 24 hrs., gradually begin eating a regular diet. Avoid any dairy products, spicy and fried foods as well as caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine for another day or so.
- Try over-the-counter medications: Bonine or Dramamine Less Drowsy (meclizine 25 mg.) every 6-8 hours as needed for nausea. Pepto Bismol or Immodium AD may be effective for diarrhea. Tylenol is a good choice for fever or aches because it is gentle on the stomach. CAUTION: Always follow package instructions.

The information presented here is not intended to be used for the diagnosis of a health problem or as a substitute for consulting a licensed medical professional. When using an Over-the-Counter medication please be sure to follow the package instructions. Contact Health Services if you have any additional questions, concerns or to make an appointment.

The Wellness Center at University Crossing
978-934-6800
http://www.uml.edu/student-services/Wellness-Center