

**CHILDREN'S DIGESTIVE
HEALTH & NUTRITION
FOUNDATION**[About Us](#)[Public Info.](#)[Press Room](#)[What's New](#)[Medical Professionals](#)[Members Only](#)[Home](#)

TODDLER'S DIARRHEA

CHRONIC NON-SPECIFIC DIARRHEA OF INFANCY **Information for parents**

Toddler's diarrhea or "Non-specific Diarrhea of Infancy" is a very common problem for young children. It is a source of much anxiety and frustration for parents. The child has large watery stools which may occur many times a day or only once a day. The stool can be any color and may be very smelly. The child with toddler's diarrhea is healthy in every way and has normal weight gain and growth. In most children, the condition resolves by 2 years of age but it can last up to 5 years old. Children with toddler's diarrhea are usually potty-trained with no more problems than other children.

Symptoms

Toddler's diarrhea is remarkable for its lack of symptoms other than large watery stools. Children are energetic, healthy, and of normal weight and height. The stools are not painful for them; in fact they are usually not at all concerned about their diarrhea. The stools often contain undigested food but should not contain blood. Sometimes children develop a painful or even bloody diaper rash due to irritation of liquid stool. Children with toddler's diarrhea do not become dehydrated unless they are ill. They may become dehydrated more easily if they get viral diarrhea or "flu".

Causes

1. Even though toddler's diarrhea can be annoying to parents, it is not considered to be a disease.
2. There are no complications of toddler's diarrhea (except diaper rash) and no serious effects.
3. Doctors think toddler's diarrhea is a very watery stool pattern, perhaps related to rapid intestinal motion. These stools are at one end of the normal range for toddlers.
4. Children with toddler's diarrhea do not go on to develop serious diseases such as malnutrition, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, or dysentery. The condition resolves on its own by age 2 to 5 years. Toddler's diarrhea may run in families. It may be related to diet or follow a viral illness.

Before deciding your child has toddler's diarrhea, the doctor must be sure that the child does not have a real disease with similar symptoms. Children with toddler's diarrhea have normal laboratory tests. Therefore, your doctor must rule out diseases which mimic toddler's diarrhea by a careful history, physical exam, review of growth charts, and sometimes laboratory tests.

The most important piece of information is a record of the child's heights and weights since birth. Looking at this growth curve allows us to decide if the child is growing normally. If a child has a serious disease causing diarrhea, it will usually cause the growth curve to be abnormal. In this case further tests would need to be done.

The most common cause of most serious diarrhea is an infectious disease, such as a virus, a bacteria, or a parasite such as Giardia. Stool tests may be done to look for these. Giardia is

very common in the United States now, especially in day care centers, and may cause diarrhea as the only symptom. It is easily treated with oral medication.

[about NASPGHAN](#) | [public information](#) | [search](#) | [what's new](#) | [medical professionals](#) | [members only](#)
| [home](#)

©NASPGHAN 2005. All rights reserved. | [Privacy Policy](#)

innovation by
activeweb

[Innovation by Activeweb](#)