Vomiting and diarrhea
(the stomach flu)

There are few things that are as awful as vomiting, no doubt about it. The most common cause for it is a stomach virus which irritates and inflames your stomach and intestines. It gets called the stomach flu but it really has nothing to do with influenza which is a respiratory illness.

If you are treating vomiting caused by a stomach virus the very first thing you need to do is let your stomach rest. Don’t try to eat or drink anything for at least an hour. If you haven’t vomited again then you can take SMALL SIPS -- 1-2 ounces -- of clear liquid every fifteen to twenty minutes. Large amounts of liquids at the beginning of the illness can actually increase the vomiting. The best liquids are water or a sports drink such as Gatorade. If you start vomiting again go back to the beginning and let your stomach rest again for another hour. If the fluids stay down then you can advance to bland foods. This should not be tried too quickly. Make sure you are able to keep fluids down for at least 8-12 hours before trying any food. This process should be done slowly.

First foods should be things that are bland. A BRAT diet is a guideline to go by. BRAT stands for bananas, rice, applesauce and toast. Other foods like crackers, chicken soup, jello can be added as tolerated. Start with small amounts and go slowly at increasing amounts. Avoid rich, heavy, spicy and acidic foods as well as fresh fruits and milk until you are completely recovered. If you start vomiting again when you try foods then go back to the beginning and rest your stomach again.

If after following these guidelines the vomiting and diarrhea continues for over 24 hours then please seek medical attention. Signs of dehydration are dry mouth, decreased urination, thirst, listlessness, dizziness or lightheadedness. High fever should prompt a visit to the doctor. Vomiting without diarrhea can represent other illnesses and should be evaluated. These are all things that mean it’s time to head to Health Service or the local clinic.

Health Service (east entrance – C.A. Gay Hall)
Phone: 320-589-6070
hlthserv@morris.umn.edu

Stevens Community Medical Center
400 East First Street
Phone: 320-589-1313