GASTROENTERITIS

Gastroenteritis is caused by irritation of the stomach and/or intestines. Depending on your history and exam, various lab tests may be ordered to help determine the actual cause, which may include:

- Infection: (bacterial, viral, parasitic)
- Heat exhaustion
- Food and drug intolerance
- Appendicitis
- Stress, anxiety, depression
- Toxic chemicals
- Travelers diarrhea
- Pregnancy
- Travelers diarrhea

Gastroenteritis includes a wide spectrum of symptoms. For mild symptoms such as loss of appetite, nausea, loose stools, increased gas and/or mild cramping, self treatment through diet, non-prescription drugs and rest is usually all that is required. A diet to follow in the next few days is:

**CLEAR LIQUIDS** (the first 12 - 24 hours)
Take frequent small sips to start, then gradually increase the amount until you can get 3 1/2 to 4 quarts down in 24 hours. Vary types of fluids (not just water).
- Gatorade
- 7-up, ginger ale, other clear sodas
- Water
- Jello (clear)
- Tea, herb tea
- Fruit juices - diluted, in moderation
- Broth (chicken or beef)
- Small amounts of boiled chicken, lean beef

**BLAND** (next 1 - 3 days)
- Bananas, pears, apple sauce
- Toast (no butter), bread, soda crackers
- Rice
- Boiled or baked potatoes, (no butter, gravy or skin)
- Cream of wheat or rice cereal
- Soups (no cream or spicy soups)
- Lots of clear liquids

**No milk products, whole grains, or uncooked vegetables**

***ALCOHOLIC AND CAFFEINE BEVERAGES ARE NOT TOLERATED WITH THESE SYMPTOMS!!****

Over-the-counter preparations may help:

**RX:**
- Tylenol (not aspirin) for fever and pain
- Emetrol for nausea/vomiting
- Imodium AD for diarrhea

**Rest:**
- extra sleep and limit exposure to others

**Return:**
- if not better in 2 - 3 days.

More severe symptoms like vomiting for more than 2 days, diarrhea more than 6 - 8 times per day, blood in stools, weakness, painful cramping and/or fever over 101°F should be evaluated by a clinician. Treatment will vary depending upon the diagnosis. It is important to follow medical instructions carefully and to let the clinician know if you are not getting better within one to two days.