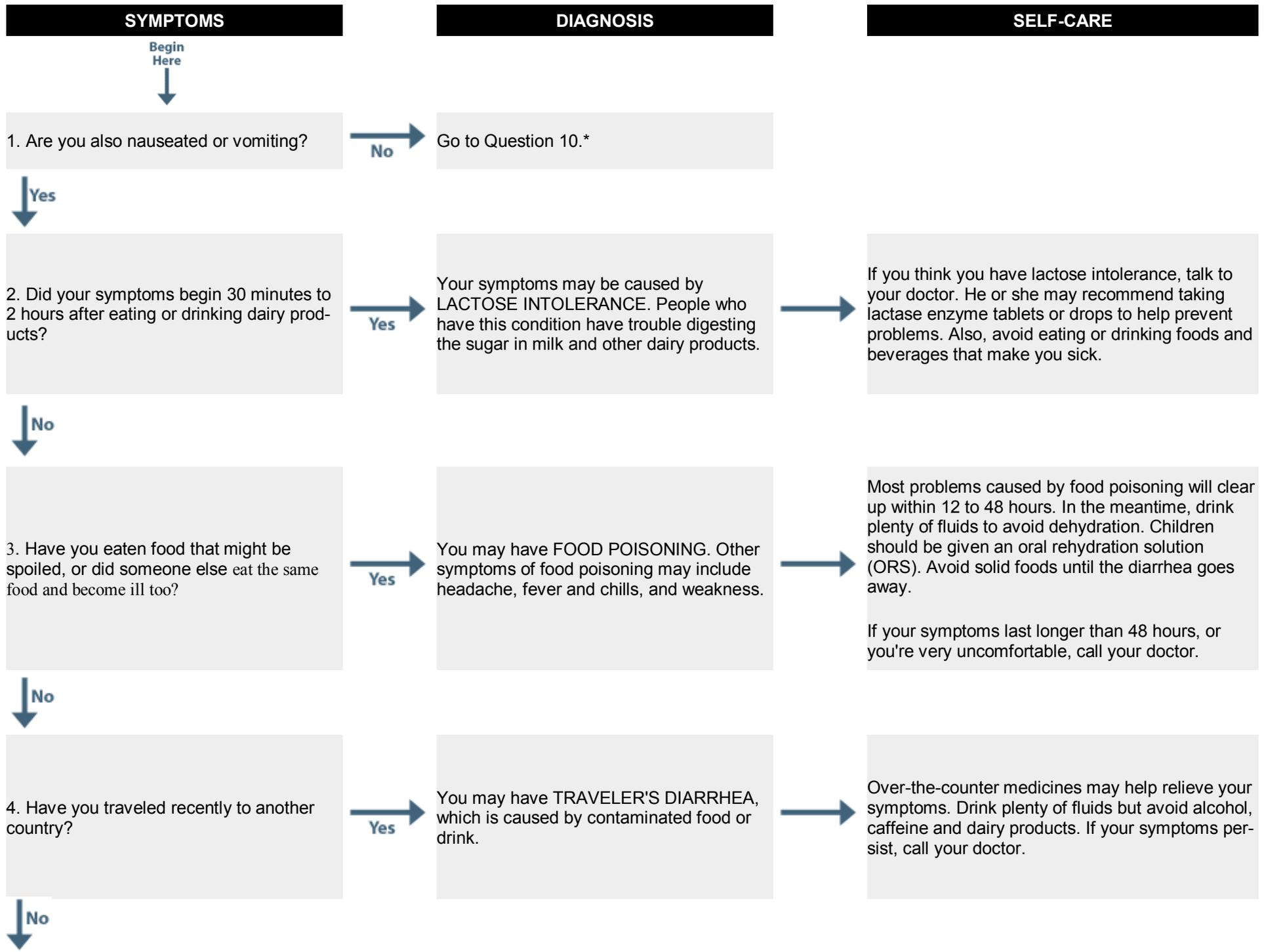


Diarrhea

Diarrhea is an uncomfortable condition that can have many causes. Most cases of diarrhea will go away on their own. However, in some cases, diarrhea can lead to dehydration or be a sign of a more serious problem. Follow this chart to see if the cause of your diarrhea needs immediate medical attention.



5. Do you have pain in the lower left side of your abdomen, especially after you eat

Yes

You may have a condition that affects the intestines, such as DIVERTICULOSIS or

See your doctor. A diet high in FIBER may help relieve your symptoms.

No

6. Is your diarrhea watery, and do you have a headache or muscle aches and a low fever?

Yes

You may have viral [GASTROENTERITIS](#), also called the stomach flu.

Get plenty of rest. Children who have gastroenteritis should be given an oral rehydration solution (ORS) to prevent dehydration. Ease back into eating with bland foods and clear liquids.

Contact your doctor if you have a high fever or

No

7. Do you have persistent severe abdominal cramps, gas and watery diarrhea followed

Yes

You may have a form of BACTERIAL DIARRHEA or a parasite (GIARDIA).

Call your doctor promptly. Be sure to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Avoid caffeine.

No

8. Do you have a fever, and are you experiencing pain in the middle or upper abdomen that radiates to your back?

Yes

These may be symptoms of GALLBLADDER DISEASE or PANCREATITIS.

Call your doctor promptly.

No

9. Are you bloated, and are you experiencing severe lower abdominal pain or cramping?

Yes

These could be symptoms of a problem such as an INTESTINAL OBSTRUCTION or blockage.

SEE YOUR DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY, OR GO TO THE NEAREST EMERGENCY ROOM.

No

*10. Are you currently taking an antibiotic or other new medicine?

Yes →

Your diarrhea may be caused by the MEDICINE.

→

Talk to your doctor about the antibiotic or medicine you're taking. He or she may be able to prescribe a medicine that won't cause diarrhea. However, don't stop taking your current medicine unless

↓ No

11. Do you have diarrhea along with gas, bloating and stomach pains every time you eat certain foods?

Yes →

MALABSORPTION problems, such as CELIAC DISEASE, can cause food-related diarrhea.

→

Avoid the foods that make you sick, and discuss the problem with your doctor.

↓ No

12. Do you have frequent bowel movements mixed with blood or mucus, and abdominal pain and cramping?

Yes →

You may have INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE or CROHN'S DISEASE.

→

See your doctor. He or she will determine what treatment is right for you. Drink plenty of fluids, and avoid foods that make your symptoms worse.

↓ No

13. Do your bowel movements alternate between constipation and diarrhea, and does your condition seem to get worse when you're under stress?

Yes →

IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME or SPASTIC COLON may be the cause of your diarrhea.

→

Gradually increase the amount of FIBER in your diet, and drink plenty of fluids. If you see blood in your stools, call your doctor.

↓ No

14. Have you had chronic constipation but suddenly experienced watery diarrhea that leaks out?

Yes →

You may have a FECAL IMPACTION, a large mass of dry, hard stool that is trapped in the rectum.

→

See your doctor.

↓ No

For more information, please talk to your doctor. If you think your problem is serious, call your doctor right away.