

Diarrhoea

What Is Diarrhoea?

Diarrhoea is when you pass loose, watery stools more frequently than usual. It is a common digestive issue that can range from mild and short-lived to more severe and persistent. Diarrhoea can sometimes occur on its own or as a symptom of an underlying condition affecting your digestive system. While it is often temporary, persistent diarrhoea can interfere with your daily life and may require medical attention.

At Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic, we specialise in diagnosing and treating the causes of diarrhoea, helping you regain control of your digestive health.

What Causes Diarrhoea?

Diarrhoea can result from various factors, including:

- **Infections:** Viral, bacterial, or parasitic infections (e.g., norovirus, E. coli, or giardia) are common causes
- **Food-related issues:** Food poisoning, intolerances (e.g., lactose intolerance), or allergies can trigger diarrhoea
- **Digestive disorders:** Conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), or coeliac disease may cause persistent diarrhoea
- **Medications:** Antibiotics, laxatives, and some cancer treatments can disrupt your digestive system.
- **Stress and anxiety:** Emotional stress can affect your gut and lead to diarrhoea
- **Other health issues:** Conditions like an overactive thyroid or diabetes can contribute to diarrhoea

What Are The Symptoms Of Diarrhoea?

The main symptom of diarrhoea is passing loose or watery stools more often than usual. Depending on the cause, you may also experience:

- Stomach cramps or pain
- Bloating or gas
- Urgency to use the toilet
- Nausea or vomiting
- Fever or chills (if an infection is present)
- Fatigue and dehydration

If diarrhoea persists for more than a few days, worsens, or is accompanied by concerning symptoms, it's important to seek medical advice.

When To Seek Urgent Medical Attention

Contact a doctor immediately if you experience:

- Blood in your stools or black, tarry stools
- Severe or persistent abdominal pain
- Unexplained weight loss
- High fever or chills
- Signs of dehydration, such as dry mouth, dizziness, or reduced urination
- Diarrhoea lasting more than a week

These symptoms could indicate a more serious condition requiring prompt medical attention.

How Is Diarrhoea Investigated?

At Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic, we use advanced diagnostic tools to investigate the cause of diarrhoea and recommend appropriate treatment. Tests may include:

- **Stool tests:** To detect infections, inflammation, or other abnormalities.
- **Blood tests:** To check for underlying conditions, such as coeliac disease or anaemia.
- **Endoscopy:** A thin, flexible camera is used to examine your digestive tract for signs of inflammation, damage, or other abnormalities.
- **Imaging tests:** Ultrasound, CT, or MRI scans may be used to identify issues in your digestive system.
- **Breath tests:** To diagnose food intolerances, such as lactose intolerance.

How Can You Manage Diarrhoea?

For mild diarrhoea, simple steps can help ease symptoms:

- **Stay hydrated:** Drink plenty of fluids, such as water, oral rehydration solutions, or clear broths, to replace lost fluids and electrolytes.
- **Eat a bland diet:** Opt for plain, easy-to-digest foods like bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast (often called the BRAT diet).
- **Avoid triggers:** Limit dairy, caffeine, alcohol, and fatty or spicy foods.
- **Rest:** Allow your body time to recover.

If diarrhoea persists or worsens, your doctor may recommend:

- **Medications:** Such as anti-diarrhoeal drugs, antibiotics (if an infection is present), or medications to treat underlying conditions like IBD.
- **Dietary changes:** A dietitian can help identify and manage food intolerances or allergies.
- **Further investigations:** To address any ongoing or complex issues.

Why Choose Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic?

At Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic, we provide expert care for diagnosing and managing diarrhoea and related digestive conditions. Our team of experienced specialists uses state-of-the-art tools to determine the cause of your symptoms and create a personalised treatment plan. Whether you need diagnostic tests or ongoing support, we are dedicated to helping you feel better and improve your quality of life.

Contact Us

If you're struggling with persistent or severe diarrhoea, contact Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic today to book a consultation. Early diagnosis and treatment can help you regain control of your health and get back to feeling your best.