

Table I. Clinical characteristics of acute infectious diarrheas

| | Mild | Moderate | Severe |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|
| Etiology | Usually viral or preformed toxins | Usually viral, some bacteria, parasites | Bacteria |
| Predominant symptoms | Vomiting may be predominant with food poisoning (toxin-mediated); can also have watery diarrhea (3-5 BM daily) | Large volume (>6 BM daily), watery diarrhea | Small volume, dysentery (frequent stools with blood or mucus) |
| Associated symptoms | Malaise, myalgias | Mild fever, diffuse mid-abdominal cramping or pain, dehydration with possible malabsorption | Fever, lower abdominal pain, tenesmus |