



Viral gastro- enteritis

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Viral gastroenteritis

WHAT IS VIRAL GASTROENTERITIS?

VIRAL GASTROENTERITIS is inflammation of the stomach and the intestines. Though it is commonly called the “stomach flu”, it is not caused by the influenza or flu virus.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

Different viruses including rotaviruses, adenoviruses and noroviruses cause viral gastroenteritis.

It is not caused by medications, medical conditions, bacteria such as Salmonella, Escherichia coli (E. coli) or parasites.

IS IT CONTAGIOUS?

Yes, it is contagious and can be spread to anyone. Those infected with viral gastroenteritis are contagious from the moment they begin to feel ill to at least three days after recovery.

There are many different strains of the virus which make developing a long-lasting immunity difficult.

HOW DO YOU CONTRACT IT?

Viral gastroenteritis can be contracted in any of the following ways:

- Eating or drinking foods or liquids contaminated with the virus.
- Touching contaminated surfaces with your hands and then touching your mouth or face.
- Coming into direct contact with a person with viral gastroenteritis.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Vomiting and diarrhea
- Headache
- Fever
- Abdominal cramps or stomach ache

Symptoms generally begin to surface one to two days following infection and can last up to 10 days, depending on the strain of the virus you are infected with.

While most people completely recover from viral gastroenteritis with no long-term effects, it can become a serious illness for individuals who are unable to drink enough fluids to replace what is lost from vomiting and diarrhea.

Infants, young children and seniors are at risk of dehydration from loss of fluid. Persons with compromised or weakened immune systems are also at risk and may require hospitalization.

HOW DO YOU TREAT IT?

Consult your physician about the types of fluids to consume when severely dehydrated.

Medications, including antibiotics, should be avoided unless recommended by a physician.

HOW DO YOU PREVENT IT?

- Wash hands frequently, especially after using the toilet and before preparing or eating food.
- Disinfect contaminated surfaces with household bleach-based cleaners
- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables before eating
- Wash soiled clothing and linens immediately