

Gastroenteritis (stomach flu)

Information for Parents and Caregivers

What is Gastroenteritis?

Gastroenteritis, often called the stomach flu, is a common illness that causes vomiting, diarrhea, and belly cramps. It is mainly caused by viruses (Norovirus and Rotavirus).

Symptoms of a Gastroenteritis

Most common signs and symptoms includes fever, dehydration, stomach cramps, diarrhea and poor appetite.

Is Gastroenteritis Contagious? What is its Duration?

Viral infection is contagious for about 7-14 days. Duration of infection is usually 5-7 days for Rotavirus and 1-2 days for Norovirus.

Treatment & Symptom Management

Treatment involves rehydration with oral electrolytes, bed rest, acetaminophen to manage fever and rarely are antibiotics used for treatment. Drugs that stop diarrhea and antibiotics might be given but only in certain specific situations under the guidance of a doctor.

Prevention

Regular hand washing to prevent the spread of germs, following food safety guidelines to prevent food poisoning and making sure kids get recommended immunization on time.

When Can a Sick Child Return to Day Care, School, and other Social Settings?

A sick child should be excluded from social settings until they are diarrhea and fever free for 24 hours.



ALABAMA REGIONAL CENTER FOR INFECTION PREVENTION
AND CONTROL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
The University of Alabama at Birmingham

Alabama Department of Health, Communicable Disease Chart for Alabama's Schools and Childcare Facilities,
<https://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/infectiousdiseases/assets/countyschoolsinfection2pg.11.17.15.pdf>

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