

Viral Gastroenteritis

What is viral gastroenteritis?

It is an inflammation of the intestinal tract caused by a variety of viruses. Often called the “stomach flu”, it results in vomiting and diarrhea.

What are the symptoms?

The main symptoms are watery diarrhea and vomiting. A person may also experience headache, fever, and abdominal cramping. Symptoms usually begin 1-2 days after exposure and may last from 1 to 10 days.

How are these viruses spread?

These viruses are spread through close contact with an infected individual, or by eating or drinking contaminated food or beverages. These items become contaminated by individuals who are ill and do not wash their hands well after using the restroom.

How is gastroenteritis treated?

It is most important to prevent dehydration or “fluid loss”. Oral rehydration solutions are available at pharmacies without a prescription. Please follow directions on bottle or contact your physician for instructions. Antibiotics are not effective and should be avoided unless recommended by your physician.

If your child has a fever of 100 or higher, please keep him/her home until he/she is fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. The same 24 hour guideline applies for a student who has an uncontrolled cough, is vomiting or has diarrhea.