

Rotavirus

Viral Gastroenteritis

FACTSHEET

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What is Rotavirus?

Rotavirus is one of the most common cause of diarrhea among children.

Who gets Rotavirus?

Infants and young children are the most frequently affected with rotavirus. Adults can be infected, but the disease tends to be mild. Rotavirus infection is seen more frequently during the winter months.

What are the symptoms of Rotavirus?

The symptoms of rotavirus include severe vomiting, watery diarrhea, abdominal pain, and fever. In some instances, there may also be cough or a runny nose present. Some children may have no symptoms of rotavirus. Symptoms can be severe in infants.

How is Rotavirus spread?

The rotavirus is spread from the feces of an infected individual. This may occur when an item or surface contaminated with rotavirus is touched and then the mouth of an uninfected person is touched before hands have been washed.

How soon do symptoms appear?

Symptoms usually appear from 24 to 72 hours after being infected.

Is a person with Rotavirus contagious?

Yes, a person with rotavirus is contagious. The person is contagious during the acute phase of the disease and for as long as eight days after the onset of symptoms.

How is Rotavirus treated?

There is no specific treatment for rotavirus. Children with rotavirus need to drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. If symptoms are severe or persist, especially in infants, contact your healthcare provider.

Is there a vaccine for Rotavirus?

Yes, there is a vaccine for rotavirus, but due to suspected side effects, its use is no longer recommended.

Should a child with Rotavirus be excluded from child-care or school?

No, a child with rotavirus does not need to be excluded from child-care or school.

Can Rotavirus be prevented?

Rotavirus can be prevented by the following:

- Thorough and frequent handwashing with soap and water.
- Have children wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating snacks or meals. Infant's and small children's hands should be washed by the adult caregiver after each diaper change.
- In child-care settings, dressing infants with overalls to cover diapers has been shown to decrease to spread of rotavirus.
- Sanitary disposal of diapers.
- Disinfect toys, diaper changing surfaces, bathrooms, and food preparation areas after each use.
- Use disposable paper towels for handwashing.

Want more information?

Information about rotavirus and other related health topics can be found at the website www.cdc.gov. The DC Department of Health promotes the health and safety of the District residents. For additional information, please call 202-442-5842.

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