

# Rotavirus



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MR0024462\_RHC Rotavirus CGU Fact Sheet 4PP DL 0221



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## What is rotavirus?

Rotaviruses are a group of viruses that can cause severe viral gastroenteritis in infants and young children.

The severity of the illness ranges from mild, watery diarrhoea of limited duration to severe, dehydrating diarrhoea with vomiting, fever and shock. Rotavirus infections are often more severe than other causes of diarrhoea, are more likely to be associated with dehydration and are more likely to require treatment in hospital.

## Symptoms of rotavirus

Most people with Rotavirus will experience one or more of the following symptoms within 24 to 72 hours of initial contact with the virus:

- Watery Diarrhoea
- Vomiting
- Fever

Symptoms associated with Rotavirus infections can typically last between 2 and 5 days

## How can rotavirus be spread?

Rotavirus infection is mainly acquired by one of the following:

- Poor hand hygiene, in particular after going to the toilet
- Contaminated hands spread the virus to surfaces that may be touched by others
- Hands can become contaminated by changing the nappy of an infected infant

## Treatment of rotavirus

- A child with vomiting and diarrhoea should be taken to the doctor who will advise if any treatment is needed
- Most people will recover from Rotavirus with rest and oral fluids
- Encourage extra fluids between feeds for babies

## Can I still have visitors?

Yes – you can still have visitors however you should limit your contact with others until you have had 48 hours without diarrhoea. Encourage visitors to perform hand hygiene before and after they enter your room.

## What happens when I go home?

- Do not go to work or school for at least 24 hours after symptoms have finished or 48 hours if you are a food handler, child care worker, or health care worker
- Do not handle or prepare food for the family or household for at least 24 hours after symptoms have stopped
- Wash and dry your hands thoroughly after going to the toilet
- Do not swim in a public pool until your diarrhoea has stopped for longer than 24 hours

## Good hand hygiene practices

Hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent ALL infections, including the flu and the common cold. Encourage your family and friends to maintain good hand hygiene practices every day

## Prevention

To minimise the risk of Rotavirus infection:

- Vaccinate your children to reduce the risk of infection
- Maintain good hand hygiene especially after toileting

## Where can I get further information?

You can talk to your doctor or the nursing staff. If you wish to speak with the Infection Control Department ask your nurse to contact us.

## References

Australian Government Department of Health. 2020. Rotavirus fact sheet.

NSW Department of Health. Rotavirus fact sheet July 2012