

10 Facts About Gastroenteritis

Gastroenteritis is inflammation of the stomach and intestines, typically resulting from bacterial, parasitic or viral infection causing diarrhea and vomiting



The most common cause is viral. The main types are rotavirus and norovirus; bacteria such as E. Coli and Salmonella and parasites such as Giardia can also trigger it

Symptoms include watery diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, fever, nausea and headache

Gastroenteritis is very contagious. The organism is spread mainly through the fecal-oral route, which means that fecal matter of an infected person can get into the mouth of an uninfected person



The infection can spread from person to person via:

- Contact with an infected person
- Consumption of contaminated food or water
- Unwashed hands after going to the bathroom or changing the diaper of an infected person



Gastroenteritis may last from 3 - 8 days and individuals are still infectious from a few days to a few weeks after feeling better. Infected individuals who are not showing symptoms as yet are also infectious to others

Gastroenteritis caused by bacteria and parasites can be treated with medicines but there is no treatment for viral gastroenteritis. One should get lots of rest and hydrate with lots of fluids often, as diarrhea and vomiting leads to dehydration

Young children, elderly persons and persons with a compromised immune system are at greater risk for gastroenteritis

Do's and Don'ts to prevent Gastroenteritis:

- Do** Wash hands thoroughly after using the bathroom, before handling food and before eating, after changing a diaper, and after coming from outside
- Do** use hand sanitizers where soap and water are not available for hand washing
- Do** wash fruits and vegetables before eating
- Do** ensure to cook all seafood and meats thoroughly before eating
- Do** clean surfaces often with soap and water or diluted bleach solution
- Do** Keep your hands and dirty objects out of your mouth
- Do Not** eat from infected persons
- Do Not** share utensils with infected persons
- Do Not** prepare foods for others if you are aware of being infected



If experiencing diarrhea and vomiting please visit your doctor, the emergency room or the nearest health center immediately.



Wash hands often, clean hands save lives!!